

DANCES OF LIFE AND DANCES OF DEATH: THE ADDICTIVE PROCESS,
DUALISTIC SPIRITUALITY AND CODEPENDENCE

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ABSTRACT

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James R. Farris

This dissertation examines the relationship between the addictive process and dualistic spirituality and formulates a more adequate model for the treatment of codependence. The model is largely based on the work of Matthew Fox, and the larger creation spirituality movement. The major working thesis of this study is that growth toward a creation centered spirituality, where meaning and value are seen as residing within the person, is a more valuable response to the addictive process than presently exists; it offers an important alternative to dualistic spirituality.

Addiction and spirituality are powerful forces in the human community. The study of addiction evolved from exploring destructive relationships with both chemicals and processes. Paralleling this development, the term codependence was first used to describe persons in relationship with addicts. Currently, the term codependence is used to describe both a specific addiction, to fix-oriented relationships, and a personality disorder present in all addictive behavior. The term addictive process refers to a theory which seeks to identify the common stages

of development and characteristics of addiction as well as address the social, political and cultural processes that undergird addiction. A common thread identified in the study of addiction, codependence, and the addictive process is surrender of self to an external source of meaning or value in light of perceived inner meaninglessness and valuelessness.

Dualistic spiritualities envision creation as a dualistic ontological hierarchy in which meaning and value exist outside the person. Meaning and value reside only in God, who is envisioned in terms of power and transcendence. In order to achieve meaning and value, or salvation, persons must acknowledge their own worthlessness and surrender themselves to God.

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Dancing To Life

The dance of this dissertation began to take shape five years ago. Since then, many people have contributed to the dance. My committee, Howard Clinebell, Mary Elizabeth Moore and Ann Taves, offered ideas and visions which greatly shaped my thinking. Without them, this dissertation could not have come to life. Many friends walked with me through the process of creation. In particular, I want to thank Ruth Krall, Gail Unterberger, Linda Filippi, Jeff Larson and Valerie Turner for their inspiration, motivation and love. Paul Schurman gave me the gift of daring to dream my dreams. Thesis secretary Elaine Walker showed immense patience while I danced my way through the maze of dissertation form and style. I want to thank my parents, J.C. and Mary Frances Farris, for making it possible for me to financially survive higher education. Still, that support pales in light of their quiet but persistent belief in me and in the value of learning. I also want to thank my clients. I feel honored to have been a part of their journeys of woundedness and healing, despair and hope. I learned a great deal from each of them.

What I have learned most from the process of writing is that it is crucial to wonder, ponder, be curious and never

hesitate to ask questions. What I have learned most from studying spirituality and addiction is that to be human is to be tempted to surrender personal dreams, hopes and beliefs. To be human is to be tempted to seek refuge in the surrender of personal freedom and responsibility. What I have learned from watching the dance of addiction is that every form of refuge has its price.

While freedom is frightening, it is also inviting. I have come to believe more deeply than ever that comfort and strength come from embracing the truth that our spirit and the Spirit of Creation are one. It is to the music of the Spirit that we dance best.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the ancient story of the romance between the Knight Tristan and Queen Iseult the Fair, the only thing that mattered was their romantic love for each other. They met when Tristan traveled to Ireland to bring Iseult the Fair to the royal wedding where she and King Mark were to wed. During the trip the two accidentally drank a love potion. As the passion brought on by the potion clashed with their responsibilities in life, they began to draw perilously close to madness. Eventually they chose to continue their daily responsibilities while carrying on their love affair in secret.

Ultimately they were caught and fled into the enchanted Forest of Morois. There they lived close to starvation while gazing into one another's eyes. A holy hermit found them and challenged them to return to faithful living, but they declined. At the end of four years the magic potion wore off, and they came back to their senses. Hearing that King Mark was willing to pardon them, they decided to return to reality. Iseult the Fair returned to King Mark and Tristan left Cornwall. However, before leaving, Tristan made a pact with Iseult the Fair that he would always be true to her.

Their separation was an agony for both of them. After many years of loneliness and pain, Tristan met the lovely

and gentle princess Iseult of the White Hands, but as much as he was attracted to her life and joy, he was unable to love her. Eventually Tristan was wounded by a poisoned spear and died a broken and incomplete man with the name of Queen Iseult the Fair on his lips.¹

The story of Tristan and Iseult the Fair is a metaphor of the journey of addiction. Their descent into the madness of love via the magic potion and their emotional bondage mirrors the path of addiction. Given its ancient roots and the positive light in which the story has been told and retold, Tristan and Iseult reflect how deeply embedded the addictive lifestyle is in the human experience. The pattern is so deeply embedded that in the story not even God can alter its course.

Addiction continues to be a powerful force in the human community. As in the legend, these magic potions offer life, love, meaning and value, but at the cost of identity and connection with creation. If the spell of these magic potions is to be broken, humanity needs a new vision of value and meaning--one springing from within, not without.

¹ The sources of the story of Tristan and Iseult are unclear. A widely recognized modern version of the poem is found in August Closs, ed., "Tristan and Isolt" By Gottfried Von Strassburg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965). Regarding the literary and historical sources of the poem, a frequently cited reference is: Gertrude Schoepperle Loomis, Tristan and Isolt: A Study of the Sources of the Romance (New York: Burt Franklin, 1960). One source for the idea for using the Tristan and Iseult myth as an example of codependent love originated in Stephanie Covington and Liana Beckett, Leaving the Enchanted Forest: The Path from Relationship Addiction to Intimacy (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), xv-xvii.

Purpose

One purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between the addictive process and spirituality. The tools used in this exploration include theory and research on addiction, spiritual theology, and a variety of psychotherapeutic and spiritual techniques and resources. This purpose is addressed in the critical analysis portion of this study.

A second purpose is to offer a model by which pastoral care and counseling can better address the dance between addiction and spirituality. This purpose is addressed in chapter 6 and grows out of the critical analysis presented in chapters 2 through 5. A model is a symbolic representation of various aspects of a complex event or situation, and their interrelationships.² A model is a simplification of an event or situation which may or may not include all the variables involved. The variables included and excluded reflect what the model builder believes to be of importance.³ As such, the model reflects the model builder to some degree.

Models have two primary functions. First, they describe human experience. Second, by describing patterns of human experience they can suggest directions for growth and change. In short, models are a tool for describing what

² Gordon L. Lippitt, Visualizing Change: Model Building and the Chance Process (La Jolla, Ca.: University Associates, 1973), 2.

³ Lippitt, 2.

is and what could be. For example, Abraham Maslow's model of human motivation reflects his vision that human needs can be placed on a hierarchy from the simplest biological motives up to the most complex intrapsychic and social desires. It also suggests that individual choice is an important determinant of human behavior. Maslow's model not only describes his theory of motivation it also suggests that human change must be approached holistically by taking biological, intra-psychic and social/behavioral influences into account. Thus, Maslow's model not only describes what is; it also proposes a theory of change.

A variety of models exist with different goals and functions. Models can be used to enculturate or socialize, such as the model of citizenship taught to children in elementary school. The advantage of this type of model is that it helps to ensure the continuation of a group or culture. Its disadvantage is that it only maintains what already is, without suggesting avenues for change.

Models can also pretend to be reality. An example of such a model is Hitler's vision of Aryan supremacy, which was a brutal example of such a model. More gentle examples of such a model are reflected in bumper stickers which say "America Love it or Leave it" and "God Said It, I Believe It And That Finishes It." Such approaches to nationality or religion reflect models of exclusiveness in that they present themselves as the only valid model. The advantage of such models are that they provide great security and relative simplicity. Their disadvantage is that they are

rigid and do not allow for growth and change.

Models can reflect critically on the status quo and offer directions for change. New Age spiritualities are an example of such a model. New Age spiritualities frequently focus on immediate experience and offer directions for change, but they rarely consider the context, history or tradition of the culture. As a result they often appear to have little sensitivity to cultural traditions, wounds or potentials. The advantage of such a model is that it deals with immediate reality and offers possibilities for quick change. The disadvantage is that its present day focus often blinds it to history and tradition thus blunting its effectiveness as an agent of change.

Models can also reflect on present realities, past history and future implications, and out of these, offer avenues of change. An example of such a model is the effort a small town in Texas put into the restoration of an abandoned mill. The mill had once been the economic center of the small town, but with changing times had been abandoned. In deciding what to do with the building the town council not only reflected on immediate realities, the condition of the building and current economic conditions, but also on the historical significance of the building and future social and economic implications. Many voices were heard and considered in making the final decision to restore the mill as a museum.

The term suggested in this dissertation for such a model is historical dialogical. The historical component

points to the concern for integrating history, tradition and futurizing into a model. The dialogical component refers to the ongoing conversation, not only between present and past human experience but also between theory and practice. The advantage of a historical dialogical model is that it offers a means of addressing present human experience, the experience which brought the present into being and anticipated results and implications. The disadvantage of such a model is its complexity. The more factors a model takes into consideration the larger the number of potential interactions, interpretations, and possible avenues of change.

This study uses a historical dialogical model. Much like the restoration of the mill, this study will examine historical trends in addiction and spirituality, examine how these have contributed to current understandings and consider implications for the future. Further, both theory and practice will be examined. Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 are the theoretical foundation of this study, and in these chapters the variables considered important to this study are examined. These include theories of addiction, the addictive process, codependency, dualistic spirituality and creation spirituality. The goal of this process is the creation of a model, Chapter 6, which will: (1) serve to clarify the complex relationship between spirituality and addiction; and (2) offer practical suggestions for integrating psychotherapeutic skills and spiritual disciplines toward healing and wholeness.

Throughout this study the image of dance as a metaphor of human experience is used. Dance is also a good example of the historical dialogical model. Dance is about movement, feeling and expression. It is about human experience. While dances of all types express immediate human experience, they are also built, step by step, on past dances/human experience, and they ache toward the future. Dance is an ongoing conversation between the theory and practice of dance. One expresses and critiques the other. Yet it is human experience that is always the beginning and end of the dance.

Underlying Theses

One underlying thesis of this study is that addiction and most traditional models of spirituality share a common vision of creation in which meaning and value must be provided by external sources. In addictions, meaning and value are poured into a person via various substances or processes. Whether the addiction is to drugs, alcohol, religion, sex or power, the underlying dynamic is the same as the journey of Tristan and Iseult. The person, because of inner meaninglessness, becomes so absorbed by the addiction that the addiction becomes the source of meaning.

The psychological core of addiction is the development of the wounded child. W. Hugh Missildine in Your Inner Child of the Past⁴ and Eric Berne in Games People Play⁵ presented two early conceptualizations of the wounded child. The relationship between the concept of the wounded child and childrearing practices was explored by Alice Miller in For your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty In Childrearing and the Roots Of Violence⁶ and Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal Of The Child⁷. More recently, the concept of the wounded child has been integrated into discussions of addiction and codependence by Charles L. Whitfield in Healing the Child Within⁸ and John Friel and Linda Friel in Adult Children: The Healing of Dysfunctional Families⁹. The life circumstances which enable the development of the wounded child vary from person to person, but the core value system is the same. The wounded child sees herself as powerless and not deserving to live. If life and power do not dwell

⁴ W. Hugh Missildine, Your Inner Child of the Past (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963).

⁵ Eric Berne, Games People Play (New York: Grove, 1964).

⁶ Alice Miller, For your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Childrearing and the Roots Of Violence (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1983).

⁷ Alice Miller, Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1984).

⁸ Charles L. Whitfield, Healing the Child Within (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1987).

⁹ John Friel and Linda Friel, Adult Children: The Healing of Dysfunctional Families (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1988).

within the person, then these must be injected in, poured in, or earned by the person. The result is the person's dependency on external sources of meaning and value.

In its simplest form, spirituality is about our relationship with ultimacy. Western European spirituality has traditionally viewed our relationship with ultimacy in terms of fall/redemption theology. This way of viewing creation says creation itself is fallen and must be redeemed by God. Redemption--salvation from this fallenness--means surrendering to God our Father in heaven, following His redeeming ways, and no longer walking in the ways of fallen creation.¹⁰ We are lifeless and powerless without God above, and must surrender ourselves to His will, and give up our ways in order to dwell in His goodness. While human value is affirmed by the presence of the image of God within the person, it is consistently viewed as both latent and set within the larger context of human fallenness.

While the above summary of fall/redemption theology borders on stereotype, the fundamental world-view expressed is functionally correct. Western European theology has historically viewed creation as an ontological hierarchy, and spirituality has reflected this view of creation. To ontologize is to study the nature of reality and discern concrete and personal meaning within reality. In Western European and North American theology this has meant

¹⁰ This classic definition of the connection between original sin and redemption has its roots in the Pauline Epistles, the theology of St. Augustine of Hippo, and scholastic theology.

constructing a natural hierarchy of value and worth that is not distributed equally within the hierarchy. God is at the top of this hierarchy, men are not far below and then come those less valued by the culture. Historically, women, children and races and nationalities not valued by the dominant culture have occupied the lower rungs. Those who have historically been involved in creating and maintaining this theological/cultural vision have typically occupied the higher rungs of the ladder. Racism, classism, sexism and other cultural bias' have been given cosmic validity by Western European ontology. This idea is discussed in detail in chapter 4. Given the nature of this ontological hierarchy, dominant-submissive relationships have become normative for creation, for human life, and for spirituality, and they are reinforced by religion and history.

Spirituality interpreted through a transcendent ontology serves to reinforce dominant-submissive patterns of relationships. By setting dominant-submissive relationships in ultimate terms, little or no possibility exists for cooperation or mutuality between the higher and lower parties. Not only do power and life dwell outside creation, but creation itself is seen as inherently fallen, bad and untrustworthy. Meaning, value, life and power must be earned or granted to the person by an external source.

Addictions and much of Western European spirituality adhere to the same fundamental vision of creation. In simple terms, the vision is one in which persons are seen as

lacking intrinsic value or meaning. Value and meaning must come from outside, and this external source must be given ultimate loyalty.

A second thesis of this study is that just as Western European spiritualities are expressions of a deeper understanding of creation, so individual addictions are expressions of a deeper addictive process. The study of addictions has evolved from a view of addictions as moral weakness, to a view of addictions as primary illness, to a view of addictions as stemming from an addictive process. The addictive process is a systemic disease, inherent in and supported by the culture. This process values control, power-based relationships, hierarchical models, rigidity, and rational thinking.¹¹ Expressions of this disease process range from alcoholism to drug addiction to codependency to work addiction to the use of any substance or process to inject meaning into the person.

The deeper, systemic addiction underlying each of these specific addictions is an addiction to powerlessness and non-living. This unitive addiction is born of a culture which denies feelings, supports control through knowledge, fails to recognize the interconnectedness of creation and looks to external authority to validate being.¹² The psychological roots of this process may be found in life

¹¹ Anne Wilson Schaef, Co-Dependence: Misunderstood-Mistreated (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 42-43.

¹² Anne Wilson Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

circumstances which enable the development of a value system which affirms the worthlessness of the person. The spiritual roots of this process may be found in a fall/redemption theology which fosters a belief in the innate fallenness of the person and the necessity of controlling this fallen creation through a higher, external source of salvation.¹³

A new vision of value and meaning is needed if the magic potions of addiction and fall/redemption theology are to be transformed. Another purpose of this study is to show that a creation based spirituality has the potential to do this. Creation spirituality, as defined below and explored in Chapter 4, is a spirituality springing from a belief in the original blessedness of creation. Creation spirituality affirms human experience, cooperation and egalitarian relationships embedded in an interconnected world. A final thesis of this study is that the four paths of creation spirituality offer an effective means of recovery from the addiction of codependency.

Basic Concepts

Before going on, it is important to define some basic concepts. While each of these will be fully developed in the study these initial definitions provide the orientation necessary to begin conversation.

¹³ Matthew Fox, Original Blessing (Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1983).

Addiction

No one generally accepted definition of addiction exists.¹⁴ The earliest definition of alcoholism was offered by Alcoholics Anonymous in the mid 1930s. This definition focuses on the use of alcohol in such a way that its use interferes with significant areas of life in an ongoing way. Thus, loss of control is the primary determining factor in alcoholism according to this perspective. While broad, this continues to be the working definition of alcoholism used by Alcoholics Anonymous. As such, this definition reflects an understanding of addiction which has endured for 55 years. Further, given that the success of Alcoholics Anonymous resulted in research on alcoholism by E.M. Jellinek and others, this definition carries considerable influence.

The most narrow definition of addiction is that it is a physiological dependence on some substance.¹⁵ This definition is based on a pharmacological understanding of addiction involving tissue adaptation characterized by increased tolerance and withdrawal symptoms when the substance is no longer in the body.¹⁶ This definition reflects a biological approach to addiction focusing on

¹⁴ Gillian Leigh, "Psychosocial Factors in the Etiology of Substance Abuse," Alcoholism and Substance Abuse: Strategies for Clinical Intervention, eds. Thomas E. Bratter and Gary G. Forrest (New York: Free Press, 1985), 3.

¹⁵ Richard C. Bootzin and Joan Ross Acocella, Abnormal Psychology: Current Perspectives, 4th ed. (New York: Random House, 1984), 269-70.

¹⁶ Howard Clinebell, letter to author, 24 February 1989.

biochemical understandings of physical addiction to drugs and alcohol. In terms of being a paradigm through which addiction is viewed, this understanding has never played a predominant role in defining addiction. However, it continues to be a factor in the study of addiction in that addiction involves a biological component.

The predominant understanding of addiction, both at present and through the history of the study of addiction, is that addiction is a multi-faceted phenomenon which involves biological, psychological, cultural, environmental, interpersonal, intrapersonal and spiritual factors. During the late 1960s the term psychological addiction began to appear in psychological and medical journals.¹⁷ This term was used to describe two broad groups of people: (1) drug users who did not exhibit the traditional symptoms of physical demand and extreme discomfort upon withdrawal yet showed addictive behavior; and (2) persons who became increasingly unable to control the beginning or end of activities such as running, working, eating and so forth.¹⁸ These groups exhibited compulsion, loss of control, continuation despite harmful consequences, development of tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms as did substance abusers

¹⁷ Harvey Milkman and Stanley Sunderwirth, Craving For Ecstasy: The Consciousness and Chemistry of Escape (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1987), 1.

¹⁸ Milkman and Sunderwirth, 2.

yet without the presence of a recognizable chemical.¹⁹

During the 1970s, the term addiction was increasingly used in reference to populations exhibiting addictive behavior in response to both non-addictive substances, such as eating, and processes such as watching television, work, or sex.²⁰ Thus, during this fifty-year period the term addiction evolved and broadened.²¹ Still, underlying this evolution is a paradigm largely shaped by an understanding of addiction as a multi-faceted process. As will be illustrated below, the evolution of the term addiction has been shaped less by fundamental changes in how addiction is envisioned than by the amount of emphasis placed on various factors.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s a renewed interest in brain chemistry and human behavior took place in light of the discovery of enkephalins and the production of

¹⁹ Milkman and Sunderwirth, 2-5.

²⁰ Milkman and Sunderwirth, 2.

²¹ During this evolution a variety of new criteria for the determination of addiction were emphasized. Particularly with the advent of psychological addiction, concepts such as compulsion, loss of control, and continuation in spite of harmful effects were focused on as criteria for addiction. These criteria were not viewed as replacing earlier understandings of addiction, but as responses to broader understandings of addiction. During this same period of time the term addiction effectively replaced and expanded the concept of habituation. While habituation continues to be used in the literature, its meaning has fused with that of addiction in that it refers both to psychological and physical dependence.

opiates by the brain.²² The focus of much of this research was on the relationship between neurotransmitters and thoughts, feelings and behavior. While the results of this research are tentative, there is a clear sense that all human behavior creates changes in neurotransmitters which effect human behavior.²³ In short, the swing away from emphasizing the chemistry of addiction toward the psychology of addiction has, to some extent, reversed its course. Current literature indicates a consistent recognition of the place of biological factors in both injestive and process addictions.

In spite of a renewed interest in the biochemistry of behavior there is little research linking specific addictions to specific physiological processes.²⁴ The only near consensus in the literature appears to be: (1) that alcoholism has a genetic basis traceable to a deficiency of the enzyme aldehyde dehydrogenase;²⁵ and (2) that physical addiction to opiates results in lowered natural production of similar substances in the brain due to the introduction of the chemical.²⁶

²² John Hughes et al., "Identification of two Related Pentapeptides from the Brain with Potent Opiate Agonist Activity," Nature 258 (1979): 577-79.

²³ G.E. McLearn, "Commonalties in Substance Abuse: A Genetic Perspective," Commonalties in Substance Abuse and Habitual Behavior, eds. Paul Levinson, David Gerstein, and David Maloff (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1983), 13-14.

²⁴ James V. McConnell, Understanding Human Behavior (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1986), 75.

²⁵ Milkman and Sunderwirth, 14.

²⁶ M.A. Bozarth, "Opiate Reward Mechanisms Mapped by Intracranial Self-administration," The Neurobiology of Opiate Reward Processes, eds. J.E. Smith and J.D. Lane (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1983), 57-73.

Family, cultural, interpersonal, and to some degree spiritual factors are addressed by the behavioral, intrapsychic and systems approaches to addiction. Behavioral approaches to addiction treat addiction almost exclusively as positive reinforcement of maladaptive behavior. Intrapsychic understandings of addiction are varied. In summary, addictions are viewed as defenses against the anxiety created by failing to complete developmental tasks. Compulsive behavior or obsessive thought are viewed as defense mechanisms in intrapsychic theory. Here, addiction as a defense is understood as a repetitive action or thought used to insulate the individual from awareness of an unresolved anxiety. Thus, it is the anxiety underlying the repetitive behavior or thought that is of primary importance. This is not to say that the substance or process used is not of concern. Rather, it is the underlying anxiety which must first be dealt with if the addiction is to be adequately addressed.

Marriage and family systems theory approaches addiction as a manifestation of a set of rules in the family which either failed to support, or actively opposed self awareness and personal valuing. Addictive behavior from this perspective is an attempt to fill personal emptiness, relieve the pain of loneliness, or simply comply with rules learned within the system. The particular process or substance used appears to relate to: (1) whether or not the use of a certain substance or process was modeled in the family, surrounding environment, or culture; and (2) the

coping style used in the family system. While withdrawal from the substance or process used is important, the underlying issue is the healing of the maladaptive learning."

While each of the above perspectives address issues related to addiction and have played significant roles in conceptualizing addiction, none offers a definitive understanding of addiction. At various times over the past forty years each has gained considerable popularity. While each of these fields offers significant insight into the dynamics of addiction, addiction continues to be viewed as the result of an interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors.²⁷

In light of the above discussion, the definition of addiction used in this study is that addiction is the compulsive use of any substance, or participation in any process characterized by loss of control over the substance or process and the securing of its supply, and a high tendency to relapse after withdrawal.²⁸ The major behavioral criteria for the determination of Basis of Therapeutics

²⁷ Mark Galizio and Stephen A. Maisto, "Toward a Biopsychosocial Theory of Substance Abuse." Determinants of Substance Abuse: Biological, Psychological, and Environmental Factors, eds. Mark Galizio and Stephen A. Maisto (New York: Plenum, 1985), 428.

²⁸ Key aspects of this definition were drawn from: Milkman and Sunderwirth, 5-6; Sef, When Society Becomes an Addict, 18-24; Max Meir Glatt, A Guide to Addiction and Its Treatment (New York: Wiley, 1974), 1-19; and J.H. Jaffe, "Drug Addiction and Drug Use," The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics, 5th ed., eds. L.S. Goodman and A. Gilman (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 635-61.

increased tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, self-deception, distortion of attention, impairment of social or occupational functioning, loss of control, and continuation of use in spite of physical damage.²⁹ These are dealt with in detail in Chapter 2, along with the issues of psychological and physical dependence. The etiology of addiction underlying this definition is an interactive, disease model which views addiction as a multi-faceted human behavior whose sources are biological, psychological, environmental, and spiritual.

All definitions of addiction are limited by their theoretical orientation and the state of research. The key is to recognize the perspectival nature of a given definition, and acknowledge the limitations of the perspective. The theoretical perspective on addiction used in this study is that addiction is a multifaceted human behavior whose etiology is an interaction of biological, psychological, environmental, and spiritual factors. Given the complexity of such a perspective, the focus of this study is on the interaction of the psychological, environmental, and spiritual components of addiction.

Further, these interactions are examined from the perspective of the addictive process and traditional forms of Christian spirituality. The strengths of approaching

²⁹ This list of behavioral criteria is a modification of lists found in American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd. rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1987), 163-79; and Gerald May, Addiction and Grace (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 24-31.

addiction from this perspective are: (1) it points to a systemic and process oriented vision of addiction; (2) it takes into account family processes, cultural influences, and spirituality; (3) it is capable of incorporating behavioral and intrapsychic understandings of addiction; and (4) it is the setting in which much of the work on codependence is taking place. The primary disadvantage of this approach is its limited integration of the effects of the biology of addiction.

This definition is explored and discussed in Chapter 2 of the study. Particular attention is paid to family systems perspectives on addictive behavior, and to defining terms such as compulsion, habituation, psychological and physical addiction, and the disease model.

The Addictive Process

Much of this study focuses on the concept of the addictive process. Thus, a clear working definition of this term is crucial to this study. The term addiction has been defined above. The term process refers to

a series of contents . . . that is larger than the sum of its parts. It has a life of its own, distinct from the lives of the individuals within it, and it calls forth certain characteristic behaviors and processes in those individuals.³⁰

The addictive process is an integrative concept. It proposes that behaviors ranging from chemical dependency, to some forms of mental illness, to the fear that drives sexism and racism, to destructive family systems originate in a

³⁰ Anne Wilson Schaef, When Society Becomes an Addict, 25.

common disease process which is embedded in our society. This deeper disease process is an addiction to powerlessness and nonliving which is supported by the culture.³¹ The terms powerlessness and nonliving will be discussed in Chapter 2. This underlying and unitive sense of powerlessness expresses itself in ways ranging from the oppression of women to the extremes of fall/redemption theology.

The core of the addictive process is an approach to life in which persons learn to respond habitually to reality with fix-oriented behavior, external referenting, and an avoidance of direct problem solving activities. Fix-oriented behavior refers to coping behavior aimed at avoiding feelings and immediate reality while creating the illusion of power and control. In essence, the addictive process proposes that all addictions, whether substance or process, are expressions of an underlying addictive process. This unitive process follows a definable course, exhibits characteristic symptoms, and results in physical difficulties and ultimately death.³² The issues of cultural support of this process as it relates to addiction and powerlessness is discussed in Chapter 2.

The concept of the disease model is dealt with in detail in Chapter 2. As a beginning point for this

³¹ Schaef, Co-Dependence: Misunderstood-Mistreated, 21-22.

³² Ray Hoskins, Rational Madness: The Paradox of Addiction (Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: TAB Books, 1989), 97-100.

discussion it is important to touch on this issue for purposes of establishing a basic definition. The Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine and Nursing defines the term disease as:

A definite morbid process having a characteristic train of symptoms. It may affect the whole body or any of its parts, and its etiology, pathology and prognosis may be known or unknown.³³

This definition presents a symptomalogical approach to the disease concept. A more strict and traditional medical model understanding of disease focuses around a biogenic understanding of physical disease resulting from some malfunction of the body.³⁴ From this perspective all addictions should be traceable to an underlying biochemical, physical, or physiological malfunction if an addiction is to be considered a disease.

For addiction to qualify as a disease according to a symptomalogical definition requires establishing a characteristic set of symptoms, course of development and a description of how the body is affected. For addiction to qualify as a disease according to the second, biogenic, definition would requires all the characteristics of the first definition plus strong indication of a physiopathological processes underlying the symptoms.

In reviewing the literature it appears that there are two general schools of thought regarding addiction which

³³ "Disease," Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine and Nursing, eds. Benjamine F. Miller and Claire Brackman Keane (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1972), 281.

³⁴ Bootzin and Acocella, 7.

follow these definitional lines. The more medically trained professions of psychiatry, general medicine, and pharmacology generally approach addiction and the disease model from a biogenic perspective. From this perspective, an addiction is a disease only when a clear set of symptoms is established and an underlying physiopathological process strongly indicated.

A second general approach to addiction is populated with a growing number of psychiatrists and general physicians, psychologists, psychotherapists, alcohol and drug rehabilitation specialists, and other professionals whose interests lie in the general field of holistic health. This group approaches addiction from the more symptomalogical medical definition. This perspective addresses the biogenic issues by pointing out that all substances and activities impact neurotransmitters, and their compulsive overuse results in lasting changes in these chemicals. The result of this process of adaptation mirrors the process of opiate addiction, and constitutes a physiopathological process.³⁵ It is important to realize that these two general groups do not represent well defined schools of thought, but, rather, two broad perspectives on addiction. There is considerable overlap between these perspectives even though their definitions of addiction are different.

With regard to the disease concept and alcoholism, E.M.

³⁵ Milkman and Sunderwirth, 5-13.

Jellinek has stated that "It comes to this, that a disease is what the medical profession recognizes as such."³⁶ The problem is that the medical profession is between paradigms with regard to addiction.³⁷ With regard to the disease process and addiction, this study operates on the premises that: (1) individual addictions are diseases as conceptualized in a symptomalogical understanding of the disease model; and (2) the addictive process is an underlying, systemic disease process from which specific addictions spring. Both of these premises will be developed in Chapter 2.

The addiction to powerlessness and non-living is similar to the existentialist belief that we are fundamentally afraid of our freedom. As a result of our fear of freedom, we choose powerlessness and non-living. Within existentialism there are a variety of beliefs as to how profound this fear of freedom is, and, consequently, how much hope and capacity to change is embedded in the human spirit.

The same set of issues exists within the addictive process. Anne Wilson Schaef takes the position that we are profoundly embedded in the addictive process. As a result, hope is scarce and change is profoundly difficult. Other

³⁶ E.M. Jellinek, The Disease Concept of Alcoholism (New Haven: College & University Press, 1960), 12.

³⁷ Howard Shaffer and Janice Kauffman, "The Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis of Addiction," Alcoholism and Substance Abuse: Strategies for Clinical Intervention, eds. Thomas E. Bratter and Gary G. Forrest (New York: Free Press, 1985), 229-30.

writers in the field see the addictive process as a strong presence, but hold more hope for change.

This author has considerable problems with Schaef's pessimism. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, Schaef fuses the White Male System with the addictive process. While this is a fascinating and challenging concept, the conclusion she draws from this philosophical marriage is that no situation exist that is not enveloped in addictive/white male thinking. As a result, there is little hope for change. While this author agrees with Schaef's fundamental ideas, her generalizations and pessimism weakens her arguments. This issue is dealt with in Chapter 2.

Codependence

Codependence describes both a specific addiction to fix-oriented relationships most often called relationship addiction and a personality disorder present in all addictive behavior. As a personality disorder present in all addictive behavior, codependence describes a style of relating used by addicts. As an individual phenomenon, codependence is the manifestation of the addiction to powerlessness and non-living which expresses itself as an addiction to relationship.³⁸ Since the individual expression of codependence contains elements characteristic of the coping style of all addicts, the present discussion will focus on individual expressions of codependence. A discussion of codependence as a personality disorder present

³⁸ Melody Beattie, Codependent No More (Center City, Minn.: Hazelden Foundation, 1987), 27-31.

in all addictive behavior may be found in Chapter 3.

The codependent uses relationships much like a drug addict uses drugs to get high. Relationships fill a perceived internal emptiness, prove that the person is valuable and powerful, provide a means to avoid feelings, and ultimately become a way of not claiming responsibility for life.³⁹ As long as codependents focus exclusively on a relationship, which means focusing on the other, they are relieved of the responsibility of being alive and powerful. Relationships, for codependents, are fix-oriented coping mechanisms which relieve them of the task of dealing with reality.

Codependence is characterized by external referenting. Focusing on others for value and meaning results in a lack of personal boundaries, an inability to be in relationship without surrendering personal values and priorities, a strong need to be good as defined by the other, caretaking of the partner, and a wide variety of other control behavior. The focus, once again, is on a perceived lack of personal value and meaning which is dealt with through losing oneself in relationships.

Codependence is the norm of our society. Tristan and Iseult is a codependent love relationship. Both Tristan and Iseult were so focused on the other that they were willing to surrender self, to suffer, to externalize their identity,

³⁹ Kathy Capell-Sowder, "Co-Dependent Relationships," Co-Dependency (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1988), 19-23.

and to give up other important relationships in order to pursue their love. This theme is repeated over and over in our culture. In popular music, movies, novels, television, and the myth of "they lived happily ever after," romantic love is the norm of the culture. Romantic love, as characterized in our society, is codependency.

Since codependency is part of the addictive process it is subject to the same issues of hope and hopelessness as noted earlier. Many of the writers in the field see codependency much like the air we breathe; it is enveloping and ever present. It is a part of the fabric of our individual and corporate lives. Based on my experience, this author does not believe this. This writer's image of codependency is that it is much more like the smog we have enveloped our cities with. While it is an overwhelming presence it is not the final reality. These issues are explored and developed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this study.

Dualistic Spirituality

Dualism is a way of viewing reality as composed of irreconcilable opposites such as right/wrong, higher/lower, mind/body, redeemed/fallen, and male/female.⁴⁰ Ontology, as touched on in the section on purposes, is the study of the nature of reality and the discernment of concrete and personal meaning within reality. Ontology within Western

⁴⁰ F.L. Cross, "Dualism," The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. F.L. Cross, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 428.

European theology has traditionally conceptualized reality as a natural hierarchy of values that are not distributed equally within the hierarchy.⁴¹ The higher on the hierarchy one is, the more powerful, thus valuable, one is perceived to be.

Western European theology has also historically categorized reality in dualistic terms. Creation is either good or bad, right or wrong, spiritual or worldly, fallen or redeemed, male or female, and so forth. These seemingly irreconcilable elements or modes have served to create a doctrine that the universe is composed of two opposing principles. One is good, and one evil. Dualism is an attempt to impose a rational and well structured set of boundaries on a world which is in constant flux.

One outcome of fusing ontology and dualism is a vision of creation in dualistic, either/or terms where one of the poles of the dualism is viewed as being naturally higher, better or more valuable than the inferior pole. Western European theology has historically reinforced this dualistic, hierarchical picture of reality by seeing it as ordained and defended by God. Thus, elements of dualisms which are perceived as higher are superior because they are closer to God. Such is the case with the body/spirit dualism. The spirit is seen as closer in substance and nature to God, and is perceived as more valuable than the

⁴¹ Carter Heyward, "Ruether and Daly: Theologians Speaking and Sparking; Building and Burning," Christianity and Crisis 39 (April 2, 1979): 66-72.

body. The results of this dualistic split are staggering. Since the spirit, or soul, is more valuable than the body the earth is estranged from the spirit, evangelism is nothing more than theological conversion, and spirituality need not bother with creation.

Another outcome of this vision of creation is that dominant-submissive relationships have become normative. A fundamental concern of Christian spirituality is the interrelatedness of human life and ultimate meaning. Spirituality, understood as "an experienced and interpreted relationship among human beings and the mystery of creation," points to this concern for interrelatedness.⁴²

Historically, spirituality has been embedded in the dualistic ontology of Western European theology. Spirituality interpreted through transcendent, dualistic ontology serves to reinforce dominant-submissive patterns of relationship by setting dualisms in ultimate terms where there is little or no possibility for cooperation or mutuality between the alleged higher and lower parties (God-humanity, Male-female, Humanity-creation).⁴³

Oppression

One impact of a dualistic ontology ordained by God and expressed in spirituality is oppression of both poles of a dualism. Body and Spirit are oppressed. Men and women are oppressed. God and Creation are oppressed. Webster's

⁴² Gerald May, Will and Spirit (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 2.

⁴³ Heyward, 66-72.

Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary defines oppression as an "unjust or cruel exercise of power . . . a sense of heaviness or obstruction in the body or mind."⁴⁴ Oppression is an approach to life which denies fullness of life to those perceived as lower parties in a hierarchy, and everyone is a lower party to someone. Given the vertical structure of a dualistic ontology, oppression is inherent. Only God is not subject to abuse by a higher power.

Yet God does not escape untouched in this structure of creation. Not only is oppression an unjust or cruel exercise of power against the oppressed, it also inflicts a heaviness or obstruction on the oppressor. No matter where one stands on the ladder of ontological power, the consequences of living in such a structure of creation is oppression; one is blocked from fullness of life. To be the oppressed or the oppressor is to be forced into a limited way of being. To oppress or to be oppressed is to be manipulated into preconceived ways of being which define who you can and cannot be within the oppressor/oppressed relationship. Both result in ways of living which block fullness of life.

Creation Spirituality

While dualistic spirituality and the addictive process focus on power-based hierarchies and dominant-submissive relationships, Matthew Fox's creation spirituality affirms human experience, cooperation and egalitarian relationships

⁴⁴ "Oppression," Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary.

embedded in an interconnected world. Fox contends that dualistic approaches to spirituality support a variety of world- and self-denying behaviors, including addiction, which ultimately express themselves as powerlessness and non-living.⁴⁵ The source of this dualistic approach to creation is fall/redemption theology which creates dualisms such as God/creation, salvation/sin, life/death and spiritual/erotic.⁴⁶ While fall/redemption theology demands a wide variety of dualisms, these four are seen as the building blocks on which others rest. Fox identifies four intertwining paths in creation spirituality which lead to the reconciliation of these critical dualisms: The Way of Blessing, The Way of Emptiness, The Way of Creativity, and The Way of Transformation.⁴⁷ These four paths are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The paradigm shift proposed by creation spirituality is the movement from seeing creation as fallen to seeing creation as blessed. This shift involves transforming the God/creation dualism. This dualism is "the ultimate dualism, divorcing as it does God and humanity and reducing religion to a childish state of pleasing or pleading with a God "out there."⁴⁸ The God/creation dualism creates a model of God up there and people down here, and calls into being a

⁴⁵ Fox, Original Blessing, 12-29.

⁴⁶ Fox, Original Blessing, 26-29.

⁴⁷ Fox, Original Blessing, 26-29.

⁴⁸ Fox, Original Blessing, 210.

subject/object relationship between God and creation. This model declares that creation is fallen, and in order to be saved, it must conform to the will of God.

However, if this theistic model is replaced with a model in which God is in everything and everything is in God, panentheism, the result is the transformation of the God/creation and subject/object dualisms.⁴⁹ Creation can no longer be abstracted from God because God and Creation are inseparable. This panentheism affirms the blessedness of creation and calls for a transformation of our images of God, self, other and creation. The focus of creation spirituality is the exploration and celebration of panentheism.

Liberation

If oppression is an approach to life which denies fullness of life, then liberation is freedom from these bonds. Liberation is freedom from the obstruction of mind, body and spirit. Freedom to live life in its fullness and the experience of internalized power and meaning are the core of liberation. It is freedom from the Forest of Morois and the magic potions that invite us there.

Recovery

The traditional use of the term recovery centers on a medical understanding of disease. When addictions are understood as primary illnesses, recovery is to cease using the addictive agent. When addictions are understood as

⁴⁹ Fox, Original Blessing, 210.

expressions of an underlying addictive process then recovery includes both withdrawal from the addictive substance and a paradigm shift from believing that meaning and value dwell outside (external locus of control) to believing that meaning dwells within (internal locus of control).

Method

This study begins as a critical analysis of the fields of addiction, spirituality, and moves toward a dialogue between the two. The goal of this critical analysis and conversation is the reformulation of pastoral care and counseling's theory and practice regarding spirituality and addiction. Particular attention is paid to the potential of creation spirituality to enhance pastoral care and counseling's effectiveness as an agent of recovery/liberation from addiction. This critical analysis is presented in Chapters 2 through 5.

Following this critical analysis, Matthew Fox's four-fold spiritual path are offered as a model by which pastoral care and counseling can integrate awareness of the addictive process with non-dualistic spirituality and can more effectively treat the addiction of codependency. The method used in this model-building portion of the study is to identify spiritual paths in Fox's four fold model which relate to aspects of recovery from codependency and to integrate appropriate spiritual and psychological resources and techniques. This model is developed in Chapter 6.

Assumptions/Beliefs

This study is an exploration of three assumptions or beliefs. The first is the belief that in order to recover from addiction and codependence, persons need to move from external to internal loci of authority and meaning. They need to transform their images of meaning from those akin to climbing Jacob's ladder to those of sinking into the deep God within.

A second assumption or belief is that creation spirituality addresses both the spiritual and psychological issues of addiction in a unique way. First, it points without hesitation to the relationship between the addictive process and a theology which places meaning outside the person. Second, it synthesizes both psychological and spiritual resources for pastoral care, counseling and spiritual direction. Further, creation spirituality offers these resources in a readily useable form.

A third assumption/belief is pragmatic in nature. What serves to value, heal and celebrate the goodness of women, men, children and creation is to be valued. Whatever devalues, wounds and oppresses persons, families, communities of all types and creation is not valued.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Gail Unterberger, Through The Lenses of Feminist Psychology And Feminist Theology: A Theoretical Model For Pastoral Counseling, Ph.D.diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1990 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1990), p. 5.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is that it is written from the perspective of a white, middle-class male. This is not so much a limitation as a reflection of the reality that all research, to some extent, reflects the researcher. A second limitation of this study is that the study develops, but does not test, a model for responding to the addictive process and codependence. This study is an attempt to develop a model which addresses the spiritual dynamics of the addictive process and codependence. It is based on research into the addictive process and the study and practice of creation spirituality. It is also based on personal reflections and experience.

A third limitation is the cultural context. This study focuses on Western Europe and the United States. No generalization to other, non-western, cultures should be made. What these cultural dynamics might be and how this study might apply to other cultures could be the subject of a study in itself.

This study involves finding a path out of the Forest of Morois. Without a doubt, there are many paths out of this forest, and many of these have been explored.

Psychologists, psychiatrists, clergy, social workers, psychotherapists, biochemists and neurologists have been exploring this forest for many years. Yet rarely have any of these authorities realized that they too stand in the shadow of that forest. We live in an addictive world. Until the sources of addiction are named, they will continue

to have power over us, and invite us to find clearing in the forest without ever leaving.

Chapter Contents

Chapter 2 is an exploration of the addictive process. Chapter 3 is a presentation of codependency in light of the addictive process. Chapter 4 is a discussion of dualistic spirituality in light of the addictive process and codependence. Chapter 5 is a presentation of creation spirituality as formulated by Matthew Fox. The focus of this chapter is on the four-fold path of creation spirituality, the theology which undergirds this path and applications to recovery from codependence. This chapter illustrates the relationship between codependence as a spiritual disease and creation spirituality as a means of recovery.

Chapters 2 through 5 form the theoretical foundation of the study. They offer critical analysis of the fields of addiction and spirituality. The goal of this critical analysis is to reformulate pastoral care and counseling's theory and practice regarding spirituality and addiction.

Chapter 6 presents a model integrating the four paths of creation spirituality with various spiritual disciplines and psychological techniques. The model is designed as a means of recovery from codependency.

Chapter 7 presents a case illustration of work with a self-identified codependent using the four fold path and various spiritual resources.

Chapter 8 suggests areas for future research, and offers one experimental design for testing the effectiveness of the four fold path as a means of recovery from codependence.

CHAPTER 2

The Addictive Process

The addictive process is like the steps in the dance of addiction. While much of the field of addiction concerns itself with the etiology and treatment of specific addictions, the descriptions of addictive process take a different tact. Synthesizing ideas from fields as diverse as chemical dependency, family therapy, and women's liberation, addictive process theory: (1) identifies the common stages of development and characteristics of addiction; (2) names the social, political, and cultural processes that undergird addiction; and (3) addresses issues of recovery from specific addictions considering the addictive process. The addictive process views addiction as one process expressing itself in various ways.

The conceptual framework of the addictive process views addiction as an underlying, unitive disease process having a characteristic set of symptoms and course of development. Specific addictions are expressions of this underlying process, and while the specific addiction may take various forms, the symptoms and course of development are the same. This approach reflects a symptomalogical approach to addiction. Such an approach takes into account the physiological effects of the drug, but does not limit the definition of addiction to this criteria.

Both biogenic and addictive process understandings of addiction address social, cultural and environmental factors. Biogenic approaches approach these factors by asking the following question. How and to what extent do social, cultural, and environmental factors influence the development of addictions? This approach looks at environmental issues from the perspective of wanting to know how specific factors such as peer pressure¹, family influences², or traumatic events³ affect addiction.

In contrast, the addictive process model approaches the same factors by asking the question: How is the addictive process embedded in the fabric of society? While the addictive process is concerned with the effects of specific environmental influences, these are examined in relation to the larger cultural context.⁴ Thus, both the addictive process and biogenic approaches to addiction explore the influence of peer pressure on addiction. Both also explore the psychological dynamics underlying peer pressure. The addictive process model, however, takes the additional step

¹ David B. Kandel, ed., Longitudinal Research on Drug Use: Empirical Findings and Methodological Issues (New York: Wiley, 1978).

² Steven Weiner et al., "Familial Patterns in Chronic Alcoholism: A Study of a Father and Son During Experimental Intoxication," American Journal of Psychiatry 127 (1971): 1646-651.

³ J.G.Rabkin and E.L.Struening, "Life Events, Stress, and Illness," Science 194 (1976): 1013-20.

⁴ Schaef, Co-Dependence: Misunderstood-Mistreated, 67-68.

of examining cultural myths, beliefs, and assumptions that underlie peer pressure. Further, the addictive process would explore how these themselves are embedded in the addictive process. Thus, addictive process theory might state that a crucial factor that predisposes vulnerability to peer pressure is a culture that subtly teaches that external authority is of greater value than internal authority. The students of addictive process are interested not only in sociological and psychological dynamics, but in larger cultural assumptions and beliefs as well.

Both biogenic and addictive process understandings of addiction recognize the importance of immediate environmental and broad cultural influences on addiction.⁵ Both approaches share a concern for the symptoms of addiction: issues of powerlessness; low self-esteem; control; and continuation in spite of physical damage. The fundamental difference between biogenic and the addictive process approaches is in the underlying understanding of what addiction is.

It is important to avoid creating an either/or dualism between biogenic and addictive process approaches to addiction. Such a stark contrast would be inaccurate both

⁵ The importance of broad cultural influences on addiction is presented in Leigh, 3-48. The importance of specific environmental influences on addiction from the perspective of the addictive process is presented by Lawrence Hatter, "The Metamorphosis of Addiction," Addiction: Theory and Treatment, ed. George D. Goldman (Toronto: Kendall/Hunt, 1980), 73-105.

because the models overlap at many points and because there is considerable diversity within each model. The differences which do exist are far more issues of perspective than anything else. As such, both have much to offer the field of addiction.

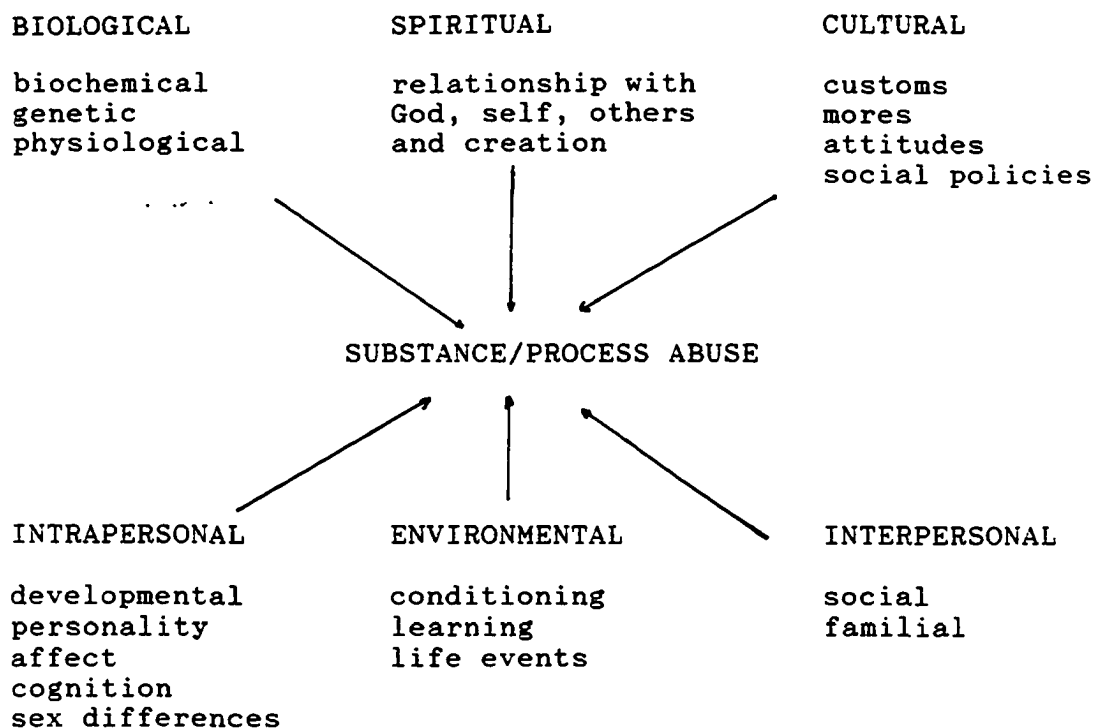
In order to understand the addictive process it is necessary to discuss the language of addiction. A complete summary of addictionology is unnecessary in the present context. What is of value is a discussion of the definition of addiction presented in Chapter 1, and an exploration of key ideas.

Addiction

As noted in Chapter 1, the field of addiction is between paradigms.⁶ This statement is somewhat illusory in that the field of addiction has to some degree always been between paradigms. For a more detailed discussion of the growth of the field of addiction over the past fifty five years see Appendix A of this study. While a variety of perspectives on addiction have influenced the evolution of the field, no one perspective has dominated. Instead, the field of addiction has historically been shaped by integrative paradigms which view addiction as multi-dimensional.

A visual representation of an integrative model is as follows:

⁶ Shaffer and Kauffman, 229-30.



This model is a modification of models created by Gillian Leigh⁷ and Charles Whitfield⁸. The essence of this model is the presence of numerous factors affecting both the development of addiction and the choice of addictive substances. Neither this model nor any of the numerous models in the literature offer a formula describing how various factors interact in the emergence of addiction.⁹ As

⁷ Leigh, 4.

⁸ Charles L. Whitfield, Alcoholism, Attachments and Spirituality (East Rutherford, N. J.: Perrin, 1985), 4.

⁹ Similar interactive models are offered by Milkman and Sunderwirth; Gerald R., Addiction and Grace; and Mark Galizio and Stephen A. Maisto, "Toward a Biopsychosocial Theory of Substance Abuse." Determinants of Substance Abuse: Biological, Psychological, and Environmental Factors, eds. Mark Galizio and Stephen A. Maisto, 425. While these models vary considerably in approach, the

such, interactive models describe the multitude of factors affecting the development of addiction and choice of addictive agent.

Given the complexity of addiction, the term addiction is often abused. One key is the creation of a definition of addiction that is both specific enough to be usable and flexible enough to address the realities of addiction. One of the most widely used, working definitions of alcoholism is any use of alcohol which interferes with significant areas of life on a continuing basis.¹⁰ The strength of this definition, which has a long tradition within Alcoholics Anonymous, is that it is simple, straightforward and usable. Further, it identifies loss of control as the fundamental issue in addiction. Its weakness is that it lacks the specificity necessary to function as an operational definition of addiction.

One of the most often quoted operational definitions of addiction is:

a behavioral pattern of compulsive drug use characterized by overwhelming involvement (e.g., disruption of day-to-day patterns of living) with the use of a drug (and) the securing of its supply, as well as a high tendency to relapse after completion of withdrawal.¹¹

The term drug in this definition refers to:

underlying similarity is a concern with the interactive or multi-causative nature of addiction.

¹⁰ Howard Clinebell, letter to author, 3 Jan. 1991.

¹¹ The basic content of this definition is taken from Jaffe. Several modifications of the basic content of this definition can be found in Shaffer and Kauffman, 250.

Any chemical agent (natural or synthetic) that significantly increases or decreases cellular activity somewhere in the body.¹²

This definition of a drug excludes processes such as work, sex, relationships, and so forth.

The above definition of addiction represents an extreme on a continuum of involvement with drug use which includes psychological and physical dependence. Psychological dependence is defined in a variety of ways in the literature, but an often used definition is that psychological dependence occurs when

the effects produced by a drug or the conditions associated with its use are perceived by the user to be necessary to maintain an optimal state of well-being, interpersonal relations, or skill performance . . . The dependence may vary in intensity from "mild" desire to a "craving" or "compulsion" to use the drug(s).¹³

Physical dependence may be defined as:

An altered physiological state produced by the repeated administration of a drug which necessitates its continued administration to prevent the appearance of stereotypical syndromes of unpleasant effects characteristic of the particular drug, that is, the withdrawal of abstinence syndrome.¹⁴

The behavioral symptoms most often related to the continuum of drug abuse are: (1) the development of tolerance; (2) the presence of withdrawal symptoms; (3)

¹² This definition is a synthesis of ideas found in Shaffer and Kauffman, 249; and McConnell, 72-73.

¹³ Shaffer and Kauffman, 249.

¹⁴ Shaffer and Kauffman, 249.

the loss of control or development of compulsion; and (4) the development of physical damage.¹⁵ While this is not an exhaustive list of the behavioral symptoms of drug abuse it does touch on the primary aspects most often cited.

Tolerance refers to the body's need for increasing amounts of the drug in order to achieve the same effect formerly achieved with less of the drug. This process involves tissue adaptation to the presence of the ingested drug. Withdrawal symptoms refer to reactions that occur upon withdrawal of the drug due to adaptation to its presence.

Loss of control and development of compulsion are behavioral indices which point to the creation of a chain reaction of events. This chain reaction involves the inability to control drug usage. One drug experience leads inevitably to continued use until control over usage is lost.¹⁶ The usage of the term compulsion here refers to drug usage where whatever positive experience initially involved in the drug experience is lost, but the person is driven to repeat the behavior nonetheless.

The relationship between physical and psychological dependence relative to the above behavioral criteria is vague. Historically, the development of tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, physical illnesses, and the loss of

¹⁵ Lawrence Metzger, From Denial to Recovery (London: Jossey-Bass, 1988), 15-24; and Jellinek, 41-45.

¹⁶ Jellinek, 41-44.

control have been linked primarily with physical dependence.¹⁷ Psychological dependence has been viewed as not so much affecting the presence of these symptoms as their intensity.¹⁸ Increasingly in the literature the line between physical and psychological dependence is blurred. Tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, physical effects, and compulsion are increasingly identified with both physical and psychological dependence.¹⁹

The relationship between physical and psychological addiction is an area of considerable debate within the field of addiction. What is at stake in this discussion are two crucial issues. First, should addiction be viewed from a symptomalogical or biogenic approach to the disease model? Second, and closely related to the first, will addictions be limited to the ingestion of substances or opened to the broader concept of process addictions? This second question has to do with the definition of the term drug.

This debate is effectively split between the two groups described in Chapter 1. More biogenic understandings of the disease model limit addiction to the process of physical addiction. In this model, psychological addiction is a secondary factor to physical addiction. While psychological addiction may determine the intensity of the behavioral

¹⁷ Jellinek, 39-40, 70-71, 146, 154; and Glatt, 17.

¹⁸ Milkman and Sunderwirth, 33.

¹⁹ Glatt, 15-19; and Milkman and Sunderwirth, 33.

symptoms of drug abuse, it is physical addiction which is their biogenic source. This approach limits addictions to physical dependence on classically defined drugs.

Those who approach addiction from a symptomalogical disease model are not limited by biogenic definitions. This group defines the disease model on the basis of the presence of characteristic symptoms, an identifiable course of development, and the presence of physical effects. Further, this group is not concerned with an exhaustive differentiation between physical and psychological addiction. This perspective on the disease model is based on research which indicates that all behavior create changes in neurotransmitters.²⁰ As a result, the compulsive overuse of either a process or ingested drug constitutes a physiopathological process.

One implication of this approach is that the term drug need not be limited to a natural or synthetic chemical compound in terms of effect on the human body. The pharmacologist H.O.J. Collier states:

Psychic and physical dependence can conveniently be regarded as subjective and objective manifestations of the same state, with neural mechanisms involved in these two aspects of dependence not very different.²¹

²⁰ Milkman and Sunderwirth, 165-73.

²¹ H.O.J. Collier, Biochemical and Pharmacological Aspects of Dependence and Reports on Marihuana Research, eds. H.M. Van Praag, et al. (Holland: Haarlem, 1971), n.p.

If participation in behavioral processes create changes in cellular activity in the body, particularly neurotransmitters, then such processes function as drugs.

A similar approach is taken by Harvey Milkman and Stanley Sunderwirth in Craving For Ecstasy: The Consciousness and Chemistry of Escape.

After a moment of reflection it becomes obvious that any stress-reducing activity-whether cleansing the body, ingesting a psychoactive substance, or praying for forgiveness-may be subject to compulsive overuse and the escalating consequences of loss of control. We propose that the disease concept may be applied to the entire spectrum of compulsive problem behaviors. As we have shown throughout this book, the distinction between internally or externally induced alterations of mood, thought, or behavior is arbitrary and misleading. Activities that evoke sensations of arousal, satiation, or fantasy bring about alterations in brain chemistry and patterns of compulsive behavior that are similar to the symptoms traditionally associated with psychoactive substances.²²

Both biogenic and symptomalogical approaches to addiction are present in the literature. Once again it is important to realize that these two approaches to addiction represent general perspectives rather than rigid positions. The primary advantage of the biogenic approach is that it is precise, measurable, and offers the security of the scientific method. Its primary disadvantage is tied closely with its advantage. In order to achieve precision it limits the disease model of addiction to the biogenic model. While psychological, sociological, and environmental factors are

²² Milkman and Sunderwirth, 170.

integrated into this model, their integration must take place against the background of biology.

The primary advantage of the symptomalogical approach is that it is capable of integrating a broader range of human behavior into the disease model. Like the biogenic approach, its primary disadvantage is closely tied to its strength. In order to achieve this diversity of scope, the symptomalogical approach sacrifices some of the precision and clarity of the established scientific/medical approach. Since it need not establish the presence of underlying biochemical, physical, or physiological malfunctions, it can conceptualize addiction as a relationship with addictive agents. Since processes and relationships are rarely as precise as chemicals and biology, this approach is vulnerable to the loss of traditionally defined scientific precision.

This author is aware of the dangers of the global approach to addiction presented by Collier and Milkman and Sunderwirth. Specifically, when psychological and physical factors in addiction are collapsed into one global process it becomes increasingly difficult to define terms and provide for clarity and precision. Put another way, such an approach further blurs the line between habit and addiction. Such positive habits as brushing one's teeth, saying daily prayers, or looking in the rear view mirror when changing lanes on the freeway could be viewed as the seeds of addiction. While Milkman and Sunderwirth attempt to limit

the issue of addiction to compulsive problem behavior, there is a strong implication that any behavior is capable of evolving into an addiction. The primary difficulty of this approach, as noted above, is that it is general. The idea, on the other hand, is important. By integrating a wider range of human behavior into the disease model a far broader range of addictive behavior can be addressed.

In terms of this study, a key factor is that both the biogenic and symptomalogical approaches are present in the literature, and represent active fields of research. The definition of addiction used in this study is that addiction is the compulsive use of any substance, or compulsive participation in any process characterized by loss of control over the substance or process and the securing of its supply, and a high tendency to relapse after withdrawal. This definition approaches addiction from a symptomalogical understanding of addiction and the disease model. It is effectively a modification of a frequently cited definition of addiction.²³ The modification made is the addition of the concept of process addictions. The understanding of the disease concept inherent in this definition is that addiction is a disease process based upon three criteria: (1) the identification of a characteristic set of symptoms; (2) the identification of a characteristic course of development; and (3) a description of the physical impact of

²³ Shaffer and Kauffman, 250.

the addiction on the body. How these three criteria are met with regard to process addictions will be discussed in the section on the addictive process.

The definitions of physical and psychological dependence stated above remain intact, except for the definition of the term drug. In the present context, the term drug may be defined as any chemical agent (natural or synthetic) or any mood-altering behavior that significantly increases or decreases cellular activity somewhere in the body. This definition is a modification of a frequently cited definition of the term drug.²⁴ The modification is the addition of the concept of process addictions. How tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, physical effects, and compulsion develop in process addiction will be discussed in the section on the addictive process.

The Dynamics of the Addictive Process

Introduction

In Joseph Heller's novel Catch-22, Yossarian, the main character, is a bombardier on a B-24 stationed off the coast of Italy in the waning days of World War II.²⁵ The novel is populated with characters who reflect the contradictions of modern day society. The squadron's doctor has become so obsessed with death he has quit the practice of medicine. The chaplain has become so obsessed with being liked that he

²⁴ "Drug," Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary.

²⁵ Joseph Heller, Catch-22 (New York: Random House, 1966).

is an insecure non-entity. The squadron commander is so obsessed with protecting his reputation that he avoids making any decisions. The supply sergeant is so concerned with building a capitalist empire that it becomes difficult to tell whether the war dominates the economy or the economy dominates the war.

Woven throughout the novel are two unifying ideas or visions. The first is a scene in which Yossarian is treating a shoulder wound received by a gunner. Yossarian is attempting to bandage a seemingly small flak wound only to realize that the gunner is growing cold and dying. As the scene plays itself out, Yossarian discovers that he has been treating an exit wound. A piece of shrapnel had entered the gunner's thigh and exited his shoulder.

A second theme woven into the fabric of the novel is Catch-22. Catch-22 is rule which says that any person may be excused from flying combat missions if he is crazy, and also, that flying combat missions is crazy. However, showing concern for personal safety in the face of danger is an indication of rational thinking processes. As a result, asking not to fly combat missions is a sign of sanity, and if a person is sane, the person cannot be relieved of flying combat missions.

The addictive process envisions culture as operating out of a Catch-22 mentality where specific addictions are exit wounds. To participate wholeheartedly in this culture is to dance a dance of death. As viewed through the

addictive process, much of the culture of the Western world is more conducive to addiction than to health. For example, convincing the public that eating is not only good but closely connected to love is a billion dollar industry. At the same time, losing all the weight gained by eating is a billion dollar industry. There is a billion dollar industry geared to convince us that it is Miller Time, and a billion dollar industry to help us recover from alcoholism. A large scale campaign exists to help youth Just Say No, while Valium and Zanax sales are booming. A predominant political theme is that we are to be a kinder and gentler nation. Yet, in order to do this we must maintain a billion dollar military budget. These interlocking contradictions are seen from the perspective of the addictive process as culturally accepted Catch-22s. Our culture teaches us to take care of feelings by fixing them with food, alcohol, drugs, or power. Yet to do so is to join in a dance of death.

There are three primary components of the addictive process. First, the addictive process describes a complex cultural phenomenon whereby large scale cultural processes serve to support addictive behavior. Second, the addictive process describes a generic disease process underlying all specific addictions. Third, the addictive process describes the interaction between cultural dynamics and the clinical disease process of addiction. As such, the addictive process proposes the existence of a unitive addictive disease process underlying all specific addictions.

Further, this disease process is integrated with and supported by the culture. In order to understand the addictive process it is necessary to examine each facet of this concept in detail.

The Addictive Process as Generic Disease Process-The Development of Core Beliefs and Characteristic Individual Addictive Behavior

As previously noted, the primary advantage of a biogenic definition of addiction is its specificity, and its primary disadvantage, its exclusion of a broad range of behavior. Likewise, the primary advantage of a symptomalogical definition is its inclusion of a broad range of experience and its primary disadvantage, its relative lack of precision. The crucial difference between the biogenic and symptomalogical models is that the symptomalogical model does not adhere to the necessity of identifying a specific biological source for the disease process. The tact taken by the symptomalogical approach is that all substances and behaviors impact neurotransmitters, and their compulsive overuse results in lasting changes in these chemicals. The result of this process of adaptation mirrors the process of opiate addiction, and constitutes a physiopathological process.

The understanding of the disease concept inherent within a symptomalogical understanding of addiction is that addiction is a disease process based on three criteria: first, the identification of a characteristic set of

symptoms; second, the identification of a characteristic course of development; and third, a description of the physical impact of the addiction. The four behavioral indices most often identified with these criteria are: the development of tolerance; the presence of withdrawal symptoms; the presence of physical effects; and the development of compulsion. The function of these criteria and behavioral indices is the creation of a workable diagnostic framework for addiction within a symptomalogical model. Workable means that the criteria for addiction are flexible enough to address the wide range of human behavior and specific enough to establish a usable clinical category.

Based on a symptomalogical understanding of addiction, in order to define the addictive process as a disease process it is necessary to identify a characteristic set of symptoms, course of development, and physical effects. Further, it is necessary to identify the behavioral indices of tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, presence of physical effects, and the development of compulsion. If these requirements can be met, the addictive process qualifies as a disease process within an established clinical category.

The Development of the Addictive

Process-Core Beliefs

The addictive process may be described as

a generalized coping style in which a person learns to habitually respond to reality by using fix-oriented behaviors to bring about desired

feelings rather than by responding directly to life's moment to moment demands.²⁶

The development of the addictive process begins with the learning of faulty belief systems in childhood, and their reinforcement in family, environmental, and sociocultural settings. These faulty belief systems center around four core beliefs:

1. Self-Image: I am fundamentally a bad person who is unworthy of love and life.
2. Relationships: No one could possibly love me as I am.
3. Needs: I am incapable of meeting my own needs.
4. Solutions: My needs can only be met through external sources.²⁷

While it is possible to go into great detail regarding the impact and implications of each of these faulty beliefs, the crucial issue is that they result in ways of being that are focused on external referenting, caretaking, self-centeredness and control.

It is not possible to create a one-to-one correlation between a person's core beliefs and the elements of a larger personal belief system or way of being. Rather, a person's

²⁶ Hoskins, 98.

²⁷ This list is a synthesis of ideas found in Friel and Friel, Adult Children: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families; Patrick Carnes, Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction (Minneapolis: CompCare Publishers, 1983), 120; and Schaeff, Co-Dependence: Misunderstood-Mistreated, 41-65.

core beliefs and their personal belief system resembles a hologram.²⁸ Each dynamic contains or reflects the whole. Thus, external referenting is an expression of the persons' core belief that they are fundamentally unworthy, unlovable, incapable of meeting their own needs, and can only meet internal needs through external sources. The same applies to each facet of the person's cognitive map²⁹ or personal belief system³⁰.

The foundations of a personal belief system are laid in the family. Within family systems theory the personal belief system is seen as originating primarily in childhood experiences. It is in the arena of early childhood experiences that personal belief systems are initially formed. This in no way indicates that the family is the only origin of addiction. As noted in Chapter 1 there are a myriad of factors which influence the development of addiction. However, these factors are frequently viewed as interacting with predisposing personal belief systems, and these are formed in the family.

From a family systems perspective, personal belief systems are learned within a family system. Healthy family systems are characterized by: open communication, unconditional love, acceptance, flexible and creative

²⁸ Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict, 37-95.

²⁹ Hoskins, 33-37.

³⁰ Carnes, 5-6.

problem solving, creativity, clear rules and boundaries, a well integrated parental system, age-appropriate expectations and roles and honesty. While this is not an exhaustive list, it does point to the core elements of openness, honesty, creativity and love.

In more practical terms, every system has functions which it serves. The family system serves a variety of functions for its members, including: (1) providing food, shelter, and clothing; (2) providing safety, warmth, and nurturance; (3) providing love and belongingness; (4) providing for the autonomy of members; (5) the promotion of self-esteem; (6) providing an environment for trial and error learning; (7) promoting and accepting feelings; and (8) presenting a basic spirituality.³¹

In contrast to a healthy family system, dysfunctional families are typically characterized by: Closed communication, conditional love, a lack of acceptance, rigid problem solving styles, rigid rules, enmeshment between members, inappropriate roles and expectations, and dishonesty.³² While this is not an exhaustive list, it does point to the core elements of rigidity, dishonesty, poor boundaries, and conditional love. Rarely in a dysfunctional family are all the practical functions of the family

³¹ Friel and Friel, Adult Children: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families, 53-54.

³² Sharon Wegscheider, Another Chance: Hope and Health for the Alcoholic Family (Palo Alto, Ca.: Science & Behavior Books, 1981), 80-88.

operating smoothly. In a highly dysfunctional family even basic survival needs may not be met. In less dysfunctional families needs may be met, but they are often met in an environment of rigidity, dishonesty, lack of clear expectations and conditional love.

One result of growing up in a dysfunctional family is the development of the wounded child. The literature on the concept of the wounded child is broad. In the present context, wounded child refers to a person who has grown up in a dysfunctional family and lives out of the core beliefs noted above.

The concepts of the dysfunctional family and the wounded child exist on a continuum. There is no such thing as the perfect family or the perfect child. The Beaver Cleaver Family does not exist. We are all wounded children to some degree. Not every wounded child lives out of every aspect of the core belief system noted above. The degree that dysfunctional core beliefs are integrated into the personal belief system varies greatly.

This process may be looked at from a variety of theoretical perspectives; each pointing to the same process at work. One such perspective is Neurolinguistic Programming.³³ From the perspective of Neurolinguistic Programming, or NLP, a person creates maps or models of reality based on their experience of reality. These mental

³³ R. Bandler and J. Grinder, The Structure of Magic (Palo Alto, Ca.: Science & Behavior Books, 1975).

maps are created much like a computer is programmed. Information is fed into the system via the senses of sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste. Our central processing unit is shaped in large part both by genetic predisposing factors and by early experiences. From this perspective, early childhood experiences influence both the structure and content of how we view reality. Another perspective is that offered by Erik Erikson. Erikson viewed this process from the perspective of psycho-social development. From this perspective early experiences shape our fundamental sense of trust or mistrust, autonomy or doubt and shame, initiative or guilt, industry or inferiority.³⁴ From the perspective of Abraham Maslow, early childhood experiences shape our basic sense of physical and psychological safety and sense of belongingness and love.³⁵ Irrespective of how this process is conceptualized the underlying themes are the same. When we experience dysfunctional ways of being in the world we incorporate skewed maps of reality or personal belief systems. This in turn shapes our perception of self, others and reality itself.

Our images, memories, and experiences compose our perceptions of self, others and reality. Since each person captures reality in their own unique way no person's map of

³⁴ Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1950).

³⁵ Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

reality is absolutely accurate. However, add to this the skewed data of a dysfunctional family, and distortion becomes almost inevitable. Further, once information is processed into a map of reality, that map is rigidly adhered to. The map becomes viewed as reality itself, and is defended as if defending life itself.

A crucial aspect of maps of reality or personal belief systems are thinking processes. Out of the interacting faulty beliefs born in a dysfunctional family setting come distorted views of reality. Within the addictive process the most frequently experienced distorted thinking processes are: assumptions, confusion, denial, perfectionism, negativism and rationalization.

Assumptions are born in dysfunctional families via the lack of clear rules, boundaries, and roles. When there is no clarity within a family, the individual learns to assume. An example of this is the Foster family. Mr. and Mrs. Foster fight a lot. At the height of their arguments, Mr. Foster usually slaps Mrs. Foster. He then feels guilty, apologizes, and kisses Mrs. Foster. They then usually become quite amorous. Susie Foster is nine years old, and has watched this dance all of her life. She assumes that the only way to fight is loudly and violently, and that intimacy is somehow connected with violence. Since she has had few contacts with other ways of relating, she assumes that the way her parents relate is the way everyone relates. Within

the addictive process, assumptions serve to reinforce the core belief system as final reality.

Confused thinking processes are born out of living in an environment where everyone spends a great deal of time trying to figure out what is going on. Since there is little clarity great amounts of time are spent trying to work through the confusion of the system. The person growing up in this environment learns that confusion is the norm. The key role of confusion in both the family system and individual thinking processes is to create powerlessness. As long as one is confused it is not possible to take control of and be responsible for life. Within the addictive process, confusion serves to keep the person from effectively questioning their core beliefs and how they live these out. As long as a person is confused about who they are they can maintain a self image in which they are powerless to shape their own lives.

Denial is the fundamental defense mechanism and thinking process born out of a dysfunctional family. The dysfunctional family breeds denial because it demands that the person not see what is actually present. Denial is the process of refusing to see what a person is actually seeing. Denial works in tandem with other abnormal thinking process to keep the person and system from dealing with immediate reality.

Perfectionism is born out of the reality that in a dysfunctional family it is rarely possible to do anything

good enough. Given the confusion, denial, poor boundaries and roles and rigidity of a dysfunctional system nothing is ever good enough. This is due in part to the reality that good enough is never defined. Further, out of this dynamic comes the belief that the person is never good enough. Embedded in dysfunctional families and the addictive process is the assumption, as noted by Schaef, that it is possible to be perfect.³⁶ Perfectionism is a paradoxical dynamic. It would appear to function as a way of motivating the person and system to greater health and productivity; yet since it is unobtainable, it serves only to freeze and frustrate.

Perfection leads to negativism. As long as it is possible to be perfect, then a person is doomed to failure. It is simply not possible to be perfect. However, if perfection is expected, and of course never reached, a person gradually adopts a negative view of life often expressed in cynicism. Negativism is also an expression of the core belief that the person is not capable of meeting their own needs and must rely on others. Since the person believes they cannot take care of themselves and is frequently disappointed by others such a core belief fosters negativism.

³⁶ Anne Wilson Schaef, Women's Reality: An Emerging Female System in a White Male Society (New York: Winston, 1981), 15.

Rationalization effectively describes the thinking processes born of a dysfunctional family and expressed in the addictive process. It is the process of logically and rationally defending one's core beliefs and thinking processes irrespective of the feedback provided by immediate reality. In a closed, linear system of thinking and believing rationalization becomes a standard way of coping.

A potential result of this system of externally oriented personal beliefs, rigidly defended cognitive maps, and skewed thinking processes is addictive behavior. The function of addictive behavior is to cope with life's problems. From the perspective of the wounded child, fix-oriented behavior is a natural and logical means of coping. It is a natural expression of the core beliefs learned in a dysfunctional family. In light of the impaired thinking processes learned in this environment, addiction appears to be a rational and logical style of life. However, instead of being an effective coping process, externally oriented fix-oriented behavior compounds the problems it was intended to solve. This leads to unmanageability both because the original life problems have gone unsolved and the fix-oriented behavior has created a whole new set of problems. As life goes increasingly out of control, the wounded child reasons that this is all the more proof that their core beliefs are accurate. They are fundamentally unworthy of life and love. No one could possibly love them as they are. They are incapable of meeting their own needs. The only way

to get needs met is to use more fix-oriented behavior or a find a new fix.

The addictive system starts with a belief system containing faulty assumptions, myths, and values which support impaired thinking. The resulting delusional thought processes insulate the addiction cycle from reality.³⁷

A visual presentation of the development of the addictive process is as follows:

DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY SYSTEM...(Rigidity, Conditional Love, Poor Boundaries, Dishonesty, and Enmeshment)

THE WOUNDED CHILD...(Faulty Core belief system focusing on: Poor Self Image, Unacceptability, Inability to meet own Needs, and External Referenting)

IMPAIRED THINKING PROCESSES...(Assumptive thinking, Confusion, Denial, Perfectionism, Negativism, and Rationalization.)

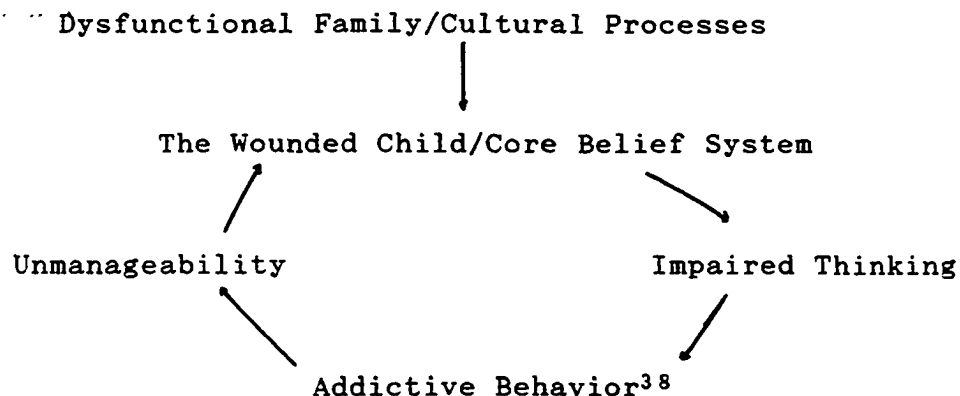
ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR...(Fix-Oriented Coping Skills, External Referenting, Limited Ability to Cope with Immediate Reality, Control, and Denial.)

UNMANAGEABILITY...(Inability to Cope Effectively or Seek Alternative, Healthy Coping Skills)

REINFORCEMENT OF CORE BELIEFS...(The Person Really Is Unworthy of Love and Life, Unlovable, Incapable of Meeting Their Own Needs, and Must Rely on External Sources.)

³⁷ Carnes, 14.

Add to this developmental pattern the addictive process as a cultural phenomenon, and the addictive process may be diagrammed as follows:



This diagram can only hint at the complexity of the development of the addictive process. In particular, it can only hint at the intricate feedforward and feedback process that exists between the wounded child, the dysfunctional family, and cultural processes. Still, it does provide a visual presentation of the self-perpetuating nature of the development of the addictive process.

The Development of the Addictive Process-Characteristic Development of Individual Addictive Behavior

The above discussion focused on the development of the addictive process from the perspective of how early childhood experiences lay the groundwork for the addictive process. Clearly indicated here was a readily definable

³⁸ The layout of this diagram is based upon a model created by Carnes, 15.

course of development and a characteristic set of symptoms. However, what has not yet been addressed is the development of the addictive process, or addictive behavior, within the individual.

A wide variety of models attempt to describe the course of development of addiction within the individual.³⁹ Each model is based on a particular theoretical perspective. For example, Meyer approaches addiction from the perspective of psychopathology⁴⁰, Galizio and Maisto from an interactive model including biological, psychological, and environmental determinants⁴¹, and Glatt from a traditional biogenic understanding of drug addiction⁴². Underlying each of these perspectives, however, is a model based on the work of E.M. Jellinek.⁴³ This underlying idea or model presents alcoholism as a clearly defined, progressive disease process which passes through a variety of stages. This process of development through stages from occasional use to utter dependence set the tone for how addiction has been envisioned in the life of the person.

³⁹ For examples of these models see Carnes, 15; Hoskins, 98; Lawrence Hatter, 73; Glatt, 15-89; Galizio and Maisto, 3-283; and Roger E. Meyer, ed., Psychopathology and Addictive Disorders (New York: Guilford Press, 1986).

⁴⁰ Meyer, 1986.

⁴¹ Galizio and Maisto, 1985.

⁴² Glatt, 1-12.

⁴³ Jellinek, 33-155.

As discussed previously, Jellinek's model began as a description of the development of alcoholism in the individual. While the model has been expanded and modified in various ways to address growing understandings of addiction, the stage development, disease model remains intact. The stages of development of addiction as modeled on the work of Jellinek are as follows:

1. Periodic excessive use.
2. Sneaking in order to avoid public censure.
3. The beginnings of compulsive use.
4. Remorse and rationalization.
5. Changing usage patterns in response to personal concerns and/or public censure..
6. Return to regular usage as a means of maintenance of normality.
7. Repetitive intensive usage irrespective of censure.
8. Persistent compulsive usage, loss of control, and the development of marked physical effects and deterioration.⁴⁴

This process involves the development of compulsion (stage 3), tolerance and withdrawal symptoms (usually between stages 3 and 6), and the development of physical effects (usually in stages 7 and 8). Further, it defines a characteristic set of symptoms and course of development.

⁴⁴ This list is a modification of material found in Jellinek, 33-155; and Bootzin and Acocella, 274-75.

Thus, it fulfills the basic requirements of a biogenic definition of a disease process.

The stages of development of individual addictive behavior within the addictive process follows the basic pattern outlined by Jellinek. The addictive process description of addiction begins with low level involvement and progresses through definable stages toward physical illness, compulsion, and loss of control. There are crucial differences, however. First, the addictive process is based on a symptomalogical understanding of addiction which includes the use of both chemical and processes in addictive ways. Second, while Jellinek's model takes into account social pressure, the addictive process sees addiction not only as a behavior subject to social pressure but as embedded in and supported by the culture.

The addictive process in the life of an individual is as follows:

Stage 1: Enhance-It or Fix-It Behavior

Stage 2: Addictive Behavior

Stage 3: Regular Addictive Behavior

Stage 4: Addiction

Stage 5: Disease.⁴⁵

Enhance-It or Fix-It behaviors refer to the use of fix-oriented behavior to either enhance pleasurable feelings or

⁴⁵ This is a modification of a list presented by Hoskins, 97-99. Several of the modifications are based on ideas presented by Hatter, 83-105.

fix unpleasant feelings. Enhancement behavior involves learning to associate pleasure with certain behavior in positive settings. An examples of this is the use of food to enhance the enjoyment of family gatherings.⁴⁶ At this stage of the addictive process, individuals learn that while good feelings are pleasurable, they can be made to feel even better by the use of external substances or processes. This association is not altogether negative. Eating a large meal at Thanksgiving or drinking wine at family or religious celebrations are not meant to be interpreted as the seeds of addiction. As corporate rituals these activities add ritual and meaning to life. Were these enhancement activities limited experiences, no problem would exist. This process is, however, the norm in our culture, and the hidden message is that feeling good is not good enough. To feel good requires external enhancement.

The same dynamic describes culturally supported responses to painful feelings. Responding to pain with internal resources is not a culturally supported behavior. What is supported is the use of over-the-counter pain relievers, in the case of minor pain, and participation in more involved medical rituals, in the case of more severe pain. Activities such as relaxation, imaging and other non-intrusive processes are not a part of mainstream thought.

⁴⁶ Hoskins, 98.

This fix-it oriented approach to pain reflects both an unwillingness to experience so-called negative human feelings and the culturally supported belief that persons do not have the internal means to deal with them. Again, this is not meant to indicate that taking an aspirin to cure a headache represents the seeds of addiction. Rather, what is pointed to is the underlying, culturally reinforced attitude that painful feelings must be fixed.

The second stage in the addictive process is the development of addictive behavior. This stage, or place on the continuum, of the addictive process refers to the degree of usage of fix-oriented behavior. At this stage, fix-oriented behavior is used as a means of problem solving in certain specific situations and environments. Thus, the person responds to certain perceived problems and emotional symptoms through the use of ritualistic, fix-oriented behavior instead of dealing with the problem at hand. This stage could be equated with Jellinek's understanding of early periodic excessive usage. An example of this stage of development is a student experiencing writer's block who finds that the only way to clear their head is to jog. The use of running can be a positive coping mechanism. Addictive behavior is present when running becomes the student's primary way of coping. Instead of exploring why they have writer's block, they run. As a result, running becomes a ritualistic, fix-oriented response to a problem

which is used in place of reality based problem solving skills.

The development of Regular Addictive Behavior is a matter of degree of usage. When ritualistic, fix-oriented responses are used frequently in a variety of situations the person is engaged in regular addictive behavior. This stage of the addictive process is roughly equivalent to Jellinek's understanding of the beginning of compulsion.⁴⁷

At this stage of development, the student who uses running as their primary way of coping with writer's block begins to use running as their only way to cope with a wide range of problems. If the student has trouble concentrating on biology, they run. If the student has a frustrating relationship with a friend, they run. If they have trouble with their car, they run. If they experience difficulties balancing their checkbook, they run.

It is in this space on the continuum of the addictive process that tolerance begins to develop.⁴⁸ While running a mile or two was sufficient to clear up writer's block at the beginning of college, by the student's junior year it takes six or seven miles to accomplish the same effect. Both

⁴⁷ The development of compulsion within the addictive process has been studied with regard to food, drugs, sex, work, smoking, gambling, collecting, and spending by Hatter, 78-81.

⁴⁸ The development of tolerance within the addictive process has been studied with regard to food, drugs, sex, work, smoking, gambling, collecting, and spending by Hatter, 78-81.

physical and psychological dynamics are at work here.

Physically, the student's body has adapted to the rigors of running through changes in musculature and cardiovascular efficiency. The student is no longer getting the same physical effect from a mile or two of jogging.

Psychologically, the same issues which fuel the writer's block continue to exist. Since no effort has been expended to actively problem solve, the issue not only continues to exist but may have worsened. Further, running may have become such a central part of life that other opportunities for growth and healing have been crowded out.

Fix-oriented behavior may also become increasingly associated with enhancing positive experiences. If the student makes a good grade on a test, they celebrate by running. If they have a pleasant date, they run. Running becomes not only a fix-oriented coping style in terms of problem solving but may become a means to enhance positive experiences.

The crucial difference between regular addictive behavior and addiction is that the person has not yet reached the point where quitting the fix-oriented behavior is painful. In regular addictive behavior, if a student sprains their ankle and is unable to run they may be upset, but not deeply troubled by the inconvenience. In such situations they are able to engage other problem solving skills. What will remain is the fix-oriented style of coping with reality. Thus, when experiencing writer's block

and unable to run the student will not examine their own experience, feel their feelings, or talk with friends about the experience. They will engage in other fix-oriented behaviors.

Addiction is present when the use of fix-oriented behavior develops to the point where it becomes painful to even think about quitting the behavior in question. Withdrawal symptoms begin to appear. At this stage of development the person will begin to use defense mechanisms, such as rationalization, to explain why they cannot stop. When confronted with objective reality regarding their behavior they will take no effective steps to change. When thoughts about quitting the behavior surface, the person experiences feelings of deep anxiety and dread. Panic attacks are common. If steps are taken to cease the behavior, acute withdrawal symptoms occur which can only be relieved by resuming the behavior. Frequently accompanying these withdrawal symptoms is a paradoxical sense of freedom and liberation. This stage is roughly equivalent to Jellinek's understanding of the use of the chemical to feel normal; stage 6 in the model presented above.

Using the example of the student runner, when faced with their addictive behavior they might state they must continue running for reasons of health and physical fitness. While this statement contains an element of truth, it is neither an accurate assessment of reality or the reason for continuing the behavior. When faced with the objective

reality that running is interfering with their social, academic, and personal life the student will take no steps to change. When the student runner even thinks about not running, feelings of dread and terror surface. Running no longer represents a way to respond to writers block or other stresses or to stay in shape. It has taken on a life of its own which is overwhelming. Put another way, fixes whose threatened or real abstinence produce these effects have progressed to the point of functioning as addictions.

The fifth, and final, stage of the addictive process is Addictive Disease. In addition to the presence of tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, and other behavioral dynamics noted above, two added dimensions appear. First, at this level of addiction physical damage begins to appear. In the case of the student runner, serious ankle, knee, or leg injuries, chronic headaches, spinal damage, or impact injuries to internal organs will appear. Continued participation will result in death.

Second, should the person withdraw from the addictive behavior, Post Acute Withdrawal Symptoms will appear.⁴⁹ At

⁴⁹ The phenomenon of Post Acute Withdrawal symptoms is well documented for alcoholism and drug dependence. See in particular Metzger, 18-19; Glatt, 249, 251-53; Galizio and Maisto, 42-44, 113-19, 166; May, Addiction and Grace, 9-10, 26-27, 82-84, 88-89; and Benjamin Kissin and Henri Begleiter, eds., Treatment and Rehabilitation of the Chronic Alcoholic (New York: Plenum, 1977). With regard to withdrawal from nicotine and food see William R. Miller, ed., The Addictive Behaviors (New York: Pergamon, 1980). For a general discussion of Post Acute Withdrawal Symptoms with regard to a wide variety of substance and process

the level of Addiction, Post Acute Withdrawal Symptoms will appear as acute distress over a period of approximately two weeks following withdrawal. During this period the person will experience a wide variety of physical and psychological distress directly related to the substance or process involved. At the level of Addictive Disease, withdrawal will result in both an acute period of withdrawal symptoms and a chronic level of withdrawal symptoms lasting for several months. This stage is roughly equivalent to Jellinek's understanding of defeat; stage 8 in the model noted above.

In order to define the addictive process as a disease process it is necessary to identify a characteristic set of symptoms, course of development, and physical effects. Further, it is necessary to identify the behavioral indices of tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, presence of physical effects, and development of compulsion. Thus far in this discussion three facets of the addictive process have been discussed: (1) the addictive process as cultural phenomenon; (2) the development of the addictive process; and (3) characteristic development of individual addictive behavior within the addictive process. These three aspects of the addictive process address cultural, family/environmental, and individual aspects of the addictive process. The behavior which undergirds each

addictions, see Jan Black et al., Post-Acute Withdrawal: Recognition and Management (Phoenix: Max Media), 1981.

aspect of the addictive process is an approach to life which focuses on external referenting, fix-oriented behavior, and a failure to respond directly to the demands of living.

The question at hand is whether or not this cultural, familial/environmental, and individual behavior is a generic disease process. Based upon the criteria presented above the results are as follows.

Symptomalogical Criteria

1. Characteristic Set of Symptoms: The compulsive use of one or more substances or participation in processes as a means of coping with reality. This coping style is characterized by overwhelming involvement with the process or substance, a high tendency to relapse after withdrawal, and the presence of impaired thinking processes including, but not limited to, confusion, denial, perfectionism, negativism, rationalization, and self-centeredness.

2. Characteristic Course of Development:

- A. Enhancement or Fix-Oriented Behavior
- B. Addictive Behavior
- C. Regular Addictive Behavior
- D. Addiction
- E. Disease

3. Characteristic Physical Effects: Continued substance use or process participation to the level of disease will invariably result in physical effects. The particular physical manifestation will depend upon the

substance used or process participated in. Continued involvement will result in death.

Behavioral Indices

1. Tolerance: Both physical and psychological tolerance begin to develop at the level of Regular Addictive Behavior.

2. Withdrawal Symptoms: Both physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms begin to appear at the level of addiction.

3. Presence of Physical Effects: The presence of physical effects may appear at any level of development. Classically defined physical effects will appear at the Disease level of development.

4. Development of Compulsion: Compulsion begins to develop at the level of Regular Addictive Behavior. Based on these symptomalogical criteria and behavioral indices the addictive process qualifies as a disease process.

The Addictive Process as Cultural

Disease Process-The Cultural Roots of Fix Oriented Coping Styles, and Recovery

Traditional approaches to addiction view individual addictions and clusters of addictions as specific phenomenon. While issues of cultural and environmental influences on addiction are addressed, the primary concern is the specific addiction. The addictive process approaches

addiction from a fundamentally different perspective. One of the fundamental assertions of the addictive process is that many of the attitudes and behaviors of the culture itself are both conducive to and supportive of addiction. Instead of first addressing the particular addiction and then examining the roots of addiction, the addictive process approach explores the roots of addiction on its way to understanding specific addictions.

Fix-Oriented Coping Styles and Their Cultural Roots

Ray Hoskins in Rational Madness: The Paradox of Addiction, defines the addictive process as

a generalized coping style in which a person learns to habitually respond to reality by using fix-oriented behaviors to bring about desired feelings rather than by responding directly to life's moment-to-moment demands. I see this as an ongoing process, and find it useful to break the process down into five more-or-less distinct levels. The line between these are arbitrary, and it would be equally possible to use fewer or more divisions.⁵⁰

The core of this definition is that the addictive process is a life style focusing on fix-oriented behavior which has a characteristic path of development. The issue of characteristic development will be addressed in the section on the disease process. Fix-oriented behavior is a coping style which responds to feelings and immediate reality through the use of substances and processes. The purpose of fixes are to create certain feelings rather than cope effectively with reality. Instead of embracing

⁵⁰ Hoskins, 98.

feelings and coping with reality in a direct, problem solving manner. This life style fixes feelings and copes with reality indirectly.

Examples of a fix-oriented coping style are:

<u>Experience.....</u>	<u>Symptom.....</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
Financial Problems	Anxiety	Eat
Marital Problems	Anxiety/Depression	Drink
Car Breakdown	Anger	Kick Car
Loneliness	Fear	Singles Bars
Growing Older	Fear/Sadness	Compulsive Exercise ⁵¹

The function of the treatments in this coping style is to create desired feelings rather than effectively cope with the experience. The result of such coping is, at the beginning, the creation of seemingly comfortable feeling states in light of pressing problems. However, since it is only the feeling that has been modified, the reality of the situation has not changed. If the reality of the situation has changed it is likely that it has become worse out of denial or neglect. Thus, it will take more and more of the feeling fix to continue relating, or failing to relate, to reality in this manner. This accounts for the phenomenon of tolerance with regard to fix-oriented behavior.

⁵¹ This example is modeled on a format presented by Hoskins, 102.

In contrast to a fix-oriented coping style, a reality oriented approach to problem solving would appear as follows:

<u>Experience.....</u>	<u>Symptom.....</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
Financial Problems	Anxiety	Work
Marital Problems	Anxiety/Depression	Counseling
Car Breaks Down	Anger	Call Wrecker
Loneliness	Fear	Make Friends
Growing Older	Fear/Sadness	Exercise/ Friendships/ Spirituality

The crucial difference is that instead of treating the feeling the response addresses the reality of the experience. In responding to reality there is the potential of practical change which will ultimately lead to feeling shifts. At issue here is that the problem solving style embedded in the culture is fix oriented. This is reflected in the cultural pattern of seeking happiness and meaning through the pursuit of external objects and relationships. Examining the cultural institutions of advertising, capitalism/materialism, and the church illustrates this process well.

In much of advertising there is the tacit promise that if you have a problem the product being offered will solve it. If you want love, get Close Up Toothpaste. Want happiness, buy a Ford. Want popularity, buy Chic Jeans. Want to be successful, use Ban deodorant.

The fundamental problem solving approach is external and fix-oriented. This process, of course, is not limited to adult happiness. Children are taught the tenets of this philosophy from the moment they begin watching television.

Closely related to the field of advertising is the economic system of capitalism/materialism. The underlying ideas applicable here are: (1) what is good for profit margin is good for the country; (2) more is always better; and (3) there is not enough to go around. Intertwined with advertising, this economic approach celebrates externalized value and the power of things to change feelings. The economic structure of the society is based upon a materialistic approach to life. If things are capable of changing feelings then the acquisition of material goods become the paramount value.

The place of the church in this dance of feeling fixes and externalized value will be discussed in Chapter 3. At present, the crucial element is the church's teachings related to self-control, avoidance of sin, and God in heaven. The critical feature is that the values taught by organized religion are frequently institutional, legalistic values rather than indwelling spiritual values. God in heaven hands down a set of rules which are enforced, or at least taught, by the church. If these rules and values are adhered to, one has an increased chance of acquiring heaven. Following these rules and values increases one's capital base toward acquiring heaven. Failing to follow these rules

results in a decreased capital base, and heaven becomes increasingly difficult to acquire. Once again, meaning and value are external. This process may be visualized as follows:

<u>Experience</u>	<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
Sin/Violation of Law	Guilt	Increasing Your Church Pledge.

From a non-fix oriented perspective this process might appear as follows:

<u>Experience</u>	<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Treatment</u>
Sin/Estrangement	Guilt	Praying for Spirituality

This is a simplified vision. The point being illustrated is that a dominant approach taken by the church is to teach and reinforce external rules handed down by a transcendent, all-powerful God and enforced by the institutional church. As in the world of capitalism and advertising, if you want to go to heaven you have to follow the rules and pay the price to acquire the means. The non-fix-oriented approach recognizes the reality of sin and estrangement but casts these in terms of a journey of personal reconciliation with a God whose focus is on healing. Such an approach does not negate the church as institution. Prayer and spiritual healing are matters of both personal and corporate concern.

Anne Wilson Schaef's vision of the cultural component of the addictive process differs only slightly from Hoskins' understanding of fix-oriented coping styles. Schaef's vision is that while the addictive process is centered on

fix-oriented behavior the core behavior focuses on addictive relationships.⁵² Thus, alcoholism is an addictive relationship with alcohol, drug addiction an addictive relationship with a drug or drugs, and so forth. The cultural component is that it is the culture, or the White Male System, which shapes our understanding of relationships as being predominantly fix-oriented.

As noted above, Hoskins approaches the development of the addictive process primarily from the perspective of Neurolinguistic Programming.⁵³ However, Hoskins also places considerable emphasis on the role of relationships in the addictive process in much the same manner that Schaefer does.⁵⁴ The difference here is primarily one of emphasis rather than content. While Schaefer approaches the development of the addictive process in dysfunctional families primarily from a family systems perspective, Hoskins views the same phenomenon from a Neurolinguistic Programming perspective without ignoring family system dynamics.

Using the Foster family, referred to earlier, as an example, Hoskins would focus his analysis on the cognitive maps being formed in Susie's mind. In particular, he would point out how Susie used the cognitive maps drawn in the

⁵² Schaefer, When Society Becomes An Addict, 25-29.

⁵³ Hoskins, 33-54.

⁵⁴ Hoskins, 60.

family to try and make sense of the world. No matter how many examples of creative arguing and intimacy without violence she experienced, she would resist changing her original cognitive map. Hoskins would also focus on how early family relationships shaped Susie's cognitive maps, and how later influences were only slowly integrated. Schaeff would spend more time examining the family system at work, and use family systems language to explore the same dynamics. Instead of using cognitive map language, she would focus on issues such as external referenting, dishonesty, lack of boundaries and denial of personal feelings. She would focus on how the family system created a sense of low self esteem which resulted in a lowered ability to settle conflicts creatively or engage in mutually fulfilling intimacy..

While Schaeff sees the development of fix-oriented behavior and the externalization of value as learned in dysfunctional families, Hoskins focuses on NLP as the means the behavior is learned within the system. The focus on fix-oriented behavior and the externalization of value and meaning is the same. The difference is one of scope or emphasis. Whereas Hoskins is more interested in establishing a clinical path of development which the addictive process follows,⁵⁵ Schaeff is more interested in

⁵⁵ Hoskins, 98.

relating the addictive process to interpersonal dynamics⁵⁶ and the White Male System⁵⁷. This discussion of the development of the addictive system will be dealt with in greater detail later.

The most significant difference between Schaef and Hoskins is Schaef's understanding of the addictive process as the White Male System. While Hoskins recognizes the cultural components of the addictive process, he does not go so far as to identify these components with any one cultural dynamic or philosophical approach. According to Schaef:

The White Male System is the Addictive System; the Addictive System is the White Male System. They are one and the same, signifying that the system in which we live has set our society on the path toward nonliving.⁵⁸

Schaef's vision is that the addictive system, or the addictive process, is at the core of the culture. While Hoskins views the addictive process as the predominant coping style within the culture, Schaef goes one step further by stating that the addictive process is at the heart of the culture. The addictive process and the White Male System are one. This is a profound, though subtle, difference. Hoskins approaches the addictive process primarily as a clinical concept intertwined with the culture. Based on *Rational Madness: The Paradox of*

⁵⁶ Schaef, Co-Dependence: Misunderstood-Mistreated, 41-65.

⁵⁷ Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict, 12-18.

⁵⁸ Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict, 37.

Addiction it appears Hoskins believes there is a dynamic interplay between culture and individual clinical issues. As such, it is not possible to tell which came first, the chicken or the egg, the cultural dynamic or the clinical phenomenon. Schaef approaches the addictive process as a cultural/philosophical force, or disease, expressing itself in human behavior.

According to Schaef, the White Male System is supported and sustained by four myths.⁵⁹ The first myth is that the White Male System is the only thing that exists. As a result, the White Male System defines reality. In light of this myth, other systems or perspectives on reality are irrelevant, inconsequential, or crazy.⁶⁰ The second myth is that the White Male System is innately superior. Anyone operating by any other system is automatically inferior. The third myth is that the White Male System knows and understands everything, and what is not immediately known or understood is accessible only through the White Male System. All other thinking processes are either inferior or simply inaccurate. The fourth myth is that it is possible to be totally logical, rational, and objective.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Schaef, Women's Reality: An Emerging Female System in a White Male Society, 1981.

⁶⁰ Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict, 7.

⁶¹ Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict, 8.

Schaef also describes a corollary system which she refers to as the Reactive Female System.⁶² This system is actually part of the White Male System, and is based on the myth of the Original Sin of Being Born Female.⁶³ Women are taught that they are innately inferior and that there is no salvation except through intervention by an outside mediator, who must be male.⁶⁴ The only hope of living within this system is to attach to a male, receive approval, and gain validity as a human being. This, of course, does not work since the woman continues to suffer from the Original Sin of Being Born Female. Still, it is the best option available.

According to Schaef, fix-oriented coping styles have their source in the central myths of the White Male System. According to these myths it is possible to control self and creation, and if it is possible to control self and creation then it is possible to control internal feeling states. This can be achieved either by an act of will or by manipulating creation so as to maintain emotional control. Thus, the myth that a person can be in total control is the source of fix-oriented coping styles.

A similar approach to the relationship between cultural myths and fix-oriented coping styles is presented by Ken

⁶² Schaef, Women's Reality: An Emerging Female System in a White Male Society, 23-33.

⁶³ Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict, 8-9.

⁶⁴ Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict, 9.

Keyes in Handbook to Higher Consciousness.⁶⁵ Keyes is concerned with the spiritual dynamics involved in the externalization of meaning and value.⁶⁶ While writing from the perspective of consciousness raising, he relates spiritual lethargy to addiction. Keyes understands addictions as emotional investments in the belief that we can fill our every desire and raise our consciousness through control or power oriented behaviors.⁶⁷ He sees this set of illusions as being learned in childhood and reinforced by the culture. While not a clinical work, the perspective offered is similar to that found in a wide variety of texts on addiction and spirituality⁶⁸ and to the Alcoholics Anonymous understanding of control and surrender⁶⁹.

While Ray Hoskins shares many philosophical, spiritual and cultural beliefs with Schaef and Keyes, Hoskins is more concerned with describing the addictive process as a clinical concept. In the prologue to Rational Madness: The Paradox of Addiction Hoskins acknowledges Keyes as a major

⁶⁵ Ken Keyes, Handbook to Higher Consciousness (Berkeley, Ca.: Living Love Center, 1972).

⁶⁶ Keyes, 61-70.

⁶⁷ Keyes, 4-7.

⁶⁸ See in particular Whitfield, Alcohol, Attachments and Spirituality: A Transpersonal Approach, 16-26; and Ruth Fishel, The Journey Within: A Spiritual Path to Recovery (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1987).

⁶⁹ Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1939).

contributor to his understanding of the spiritual and cultural foundations of the addictive process.⁷⁰ A key concept shared by Keyes and Hoskins is best stated by Hoskins:

These behaviors have the shared goal of changing or controlling the addict's internal feeling state from discomfort to pleasure. He is trying to be happy by coping with, and manipulating, feeling states, rather than by coping with external reality.

Underlying this pattern are several cultural beliefs or myths. The central mythology is one which sees mankind as machinelike. The machine metaphor divides us into two major parts: mind and body. The mind is the operator, and the body is the machine. This dualistic view ignores the spiritual aspect of man.⁷¹

The perspective shared by Keyes and Hoskins is that a central myth which supports fix-oriented addictive behavior is that the mind and body are two separate systems in which the mind is capable of controlling the body. The mind is the operator or headquarters of the machine, and the machine takes orders from headquarters. According to Keyes and Hoskins, this dualistic myth is a core belief which undergirds both the belief system of individual addicts and the larger culture/addictive process.

Schaef mirrors this understanding of dualism as a control oriented approach to reality by stating:

The White Male System is a dualistic system. It thinks in dichotomies and believes that the world must be viewed in that way. We are trained to

⁷⁰ Hoskins, 2-3.

⁷¹ Hoskins, 37-38.

perceive things dualistically and to simplify the world into "either-ors."⁷²

Schaef relates this dualistic approach to creation to her four myths of the White Male System and its central myth of the possibility of being God. The core of this relationship is that dualistic thinking and the myths of the White Male System are about control. Put more precisely, if we live in a dualistic world where it is possible to be God then it is possible to create one's own happiness through controlling self, others, and creation itself. Dualisms are not about relatedness, process, and paradox. A dualistic approach to creation sets up either-or categories which invite competitiveness and oppression. Either I am rich and powerful or you are rich and powerful. Either I am in charge or you are in charge. If I am in charge, then I must keep you in a one-down position so you will not challenge me.

Hoskins outlines the relationship between the addictive process and the belief system that meaning and happiness can be achieved at a bodily level by stating:

The core belief of someone involved in addictive coping of any kind is that meaning and happiness exist at a bodily or physical level, and are achievable as a result of direct action on a person's part. This belief leads him into a self-focused search for happiness and meaning which produces isolation from others and internal fear.⁷³

⁷² Schaef, Women's Reality: An Emerging Female System in a White Male Society, 149.

⁷³ Hoskins, 40.

The approach to life presented here is not only non-spiritual but an invitation to use creation as a fix for feelings.

While Schaefer and Hoskins share many clinical insights regarding the addictive process, a fundamental difference exists in their approach. For Hoskins, the addictive process is a specific coping style which shapes and is shaped by the culture. For Schaefer, the addictive process is both a coping style and an all-consuming process which dominates every facet of the culture. While Hoskins views the addictive process as the predominant coping style in this culture, he does not see it as an all-consuming clinical/philosophical/sociocultural phenomenon. Schaefer does.

In way of summary the core difference between Schaefer and Hoskins is one of emphasis. Hoskins emphasizes the addictive process as a clinical phenomenon which both impacts and is impacted by cultural dynamics. Further, he views the development of the addictive process primarily from the point of view of Neurolinguistic Programming. While the setting in which the addictive process is learned is the dysfunctional family, the mechanism of learning in Neurolinguistic Programming. In considerable contrast to Hoskins, Anne Wilson Schaefer sees the addictive process as an expression of the White Male System. She sees the dysfunctional family as the environment in which the addictive process is learned and reinforced, but it is

clearly the White Male System which she sees as the fundamental or underlying problem. Hoskins sees the addictive process as a clinical phenomenon which has deep cultural implications. Schaef sees the addictive process as a clinical phenomenon which is indistinguishable from the White Male System.

Lawrence Hatterer takes a similar position to Hoskins in that while he sees the addictive process as an underlying dynamic in all addictions, it is clearly a clinical concept.⁷⁴ While both Hatterer and Hoskins see connections between the addictive process, the development of addiction, and cultural dynamics, they approach the addictive process primarily as an individual issue. Hatterer, coming from a medical background, is particularly interested in establishing the addictive process as a dynamic underlying individual addictions. Consequently, he goes into considerable detail regarding the difference between habit and addiction, and how habits may be positive for both the individual and culture.⁷⁵ More emphasis is placed on cultural dynamics and the addictive process in Hoskins' work. However, his focus is still primarily on the individual. While he deals with issues of how environment and culture teach us to enhance good feelings and avoid so-

⁷⁴ Lawrence Hatter, The Pleasure Addicts (South Brunswick, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1989).

⁷⁵ Hatter, "The Metamorphosis of Addiction," 76-79.

called bad feelings, his point of reference is the individual.

Both authors explore the relationship between the addictive process and various cultural myths and attitudes, and how the addictive process is supported by various cultural institutions. Yet, reflected in their writings is a sense of hope that individuals are capable of separating themselves from addictive forces within the culture. Both see the individual as capable of recognizing and addressing the cultural and environmental aspects of the addictive process. There is a clear sense of hope for personal as well as cultural growth and change. While the effect of the addictive process on the culture is profound, it is not all encompassing.

A similar dynamic is present in Ken Keyes writing. While Keyes takes seriously the ways in which environment and culture act to restrict growth of consciousness his agenda is clearly on individual spirituality. Keyes identifies addictions as impotent ways to grow, problem-solve, reduce pain, raise consciousness, and seek happiness. While he acknowledges that the culture teaches externalization of meaning and authority there is a clear sense that individuals can choose their own spiritual health and destiny. While Keyes views addictions and the addictive process as powerful influences on the culture, his sense is that the individual spirit is capable of growing beyond these influences.

Anne Wilson Schaef has a different perspective on the addictive process. In contrast to Hoskins, Hatterer, Keyes, and a variety of other writers, Schaef sees the addictive process and the culture as one. Schaef recognizes the individual dynamics of the addictive process as a clinical concept. In Co-Dependence: Misunderstood-Mistreated there is a clear sense that Schaef is dealing with the individual dynamics of codependence and the addictive process. However, unlike clinical writers in the areas of codependence and addiction, she does not explore individual or family dynamics from a psychological perspective. At no point does she deal with the specific dynamics of how individuals become addicted or how they heal. She is clearly aware of the clinical aspects of addiction as evidenced in her awareness of current theory and the breadth of her knowledge. However, her specific agenda is not clinical in the same sense as others in her field.

Ann Wilson Schaef's agenda is a mixture of addictive theory, women's liberation, and an awareness of the power of institutions to shape individual wants and needs. In short, Schaef's agenda is descriptively clinical, philosophical, and sociological. She is attempting to identify the addictive process not only as a disease process underlying all specific addictions but as a process which is at the heart of the culture. As a result, instead of focusing on specific clinical issues her emphasis is on issues of how

cultural institutions, myths, and beliefs support, mirror the addictive process.

Schaefer's journey is both fascinating and difficult. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of her work is the fusion of the addictive process with what she calls the White Male System. Unfortunately, this is also one of the most difficult aspects of her journey. Schaefer is clearly operating out of a symptomalogical understanding of the disease process, and is vulnerable to the weaknesses of this approach. While impassioned, her word tends to be general and lacking in precision. Further, a tone in her work leads me to believe that she does not have a deep hope or belief that change is possible. It is almost as if she is expressing her own fears and frustrations, her own sense of being trapped, on paper.

In fusing the addictive process as a cultural phenomenon and the White Male System, as she conceives it, she has created a philosophical belief in which there appears to be no exit. I sense that Schaefer believes that change is not only difficult but close to impossible in terms of our daily lives. In the face of the combined forces of the White Male System and the addictive process, the individual appears almost helpless. There is hope in Schaefer's writings, but it is vague. Perhaps this is because she is still in the critique phase of her thinking, and problem solving will come later. Perhaps it is a result of her attempt to put a wide variety of human shortcomings,

fears and failings under the umbrella of addiction. While the image does not fit precisely, her attempts to identify so many diverse behaviors as addictions becomes like the typical motel room. In the same moment it is designed for every one it is designed for no one. Obviously, the phenomenon of addiction is complex and far reaching. The question is, how powerful and far reaching is it?

The questions I am posing are existential in nature. It is as if she has cast her lot with an existentialist perspective which says we are so afraid of our own freedom we not only run from it individually but build institutions to ensure that we remain enslaved. There are tremendous forces aligned against human freedom. Schaef accurately points to dualistic thinking, White Male Systems thinking, White Male institutions, and specific addictions as forces aligned against freedom. Her assessment of these as cultural and individual efforts to ensure the surrender of personal power and freedom is generally accurate. My issue is that her approach is so global that she either does not or cannot see the freedom and options for health that exist within the person and the culture. To approach the White Male System and the addictive process as she does is to leave little room for grace or hope in the world as it is. It is also to create an almost good guy versus bad guy scenario which resembles the dualistic thinking she identifies as a prime source of addiction.

I believe that there is more hope than Schaef is willing to embrace. Whether it is in individual spirituality or alternative lifestyles we are not as totally consumed by the addictive process as Schaef believes. Nor do I believe that the institutions which are embedded in White Male Systems thinking are as absolutely addictive as she portrays.⁷⁶

I would not be surprised if Schaef interpreted my critiques as part of my White Male System training, and, more particularly, an expression of my denial. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, a circular quality exists in much of the work currently being done in the field of codependency. Given the broad definitions currently in use within the field, almost any behavior may be viewed as either addictive or the seeds of addiction. As a result, criticism of the field is often turned against the one giving the critique. This is particularly true in the area of the addictive process. When addiction is viewed as broadly as Schaef and others view it, criticism may easily be interpreted as a defense springing from one's own addictions.

Fix-Oriented Coping Styles and Recovery

Different visions of the addictive process lead to different visions of recovery. For Schaef, recovery involves not only individual recovery from addictions but

⁷⁶ Anne Wilson Schaef, The Addictive Organization (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

whole system recovery.⁷⁷ However, how this shift is to take place in light of the tremendous forces she attributes to the addictive process is left essentially unexplored. This reflects her focus on the addictive process as the White Male System rather than on individual dynamics.

For Ray Hoskins, recovery involves a similar paradigm shift, but the shift is made easier by his more clinically oriented understanding of the addictive process. Hoskins views fix-oriented coping as fear-based survival consciousness. The core of this way of being is the belief that happiness exists at the physical level and is acquired by direct physical action.⁷⁸ This power-oriented way of viewing creation produces feelings of isolation which breeds fear. Recovery involves shifting consciousness, or redrawing mental maps, such that happiness is not seen as existing on a physical level but on a deeper, spiritual level. While short term pleasure is available on the physical level, deep happiness is available only through relatedness with self, others, and God. This shift requires the transformation of one's core beliefs from fear-based survival consciousness to love-based being consciousness.⁷⁹ Much like Schaef's understanding of recovery, such a systems shift requires not only individual but cultural healing.

⁷⁷ Schaef, When Society Becomes An Addict, 143.

⁷⁸ Hoskins, 154.

⁷⁹ Hoskins, 153-60.

However, given his primary focus on the individual, Hoskins' path to recovery is far more concrete and well developed than Schaef's. While he understands that individual and cultural healing are tied together, he does not fuse them as closely together as does Schaef. Healing involves transforming fear and control into relatedness and love, and complete healing is only possible as the core myths of both the individual and culture are shifted. However, for Hoskins the place to begin is with healing the person. Reflecting his belief in Neurolinguistic Programming and the importance of the spiritual journey, Hoskins' approach to personal healing focuses on challenging personal assumptions and beliefs, and redrawing mental maps of reality. Behavior change is accomplished by transforming cognitive maps focusing on fix-oriented behavior into maps focusing on effective problem solving/coping styles. This process is set in the larger framework of life as a spiritual journey. Addiction is seen as an interruption of the spiritual journey, or an alluring but false path on the journey.

Ken Keyes writes from the perspective of consciousness raising. Thus, his understanding of change, or recovery, focuses on changing consciousness.

You are ready for growth into the happiness of higher consciousness when you realize the utter futility of trying to live a beautiful life by your efforts to rearrange or change the world of people and things outside of you to fit your addictions and desires. You will find you have only to rearrange your own personal, automatically

programmed responses to life situations-most of which are childhood hangups.⁸⁰

Higher consciousness involves letting go of control.

Letting go of the illusion you can fill yourself. Letting go of the belief that the world makes us happy or unhappy.

Higher consciousness means embracing a deeper sense of meaning in one's life and in creation. The first and fundamental step toward higher consciousness is living in the now and being in contact with one's most fundamental spiritual nature, which is unconditional love. While Keyes does not cast his vision in the same language as Schaef and Hoskins, the journey is essentially the same. Where it differs from Schaef is in its radical belief in individual spirituality and consciousness raising.

Summary:

While there are many threads woven together to create the addictive process as a cultural phenomenon, there are five threads which are repeated in the pattern:

1. The addictive process is a fix-oriented style of coping in which a person habitually attempts to fix feelings rather than cope with the day-to-day issues of life.

2. Undergirding this life style are dualistic perceptions of self, other, and creation which foster fear based ways of relating.

3. These dualistic, fear based ways of relating are integrated in and supported by the culture.

⁸⁰ Keyes, 2.

4. Recovery from the addictive system involves a paradigm shift from fear/control to love/process based ways of relating with self, other, creation, and God.

5. While psychological, environmental, and sociocultural issues are of tremendous importance, the journey from fear/control to love/process is fundamentally a spiritual quest.

Chapter Summary

One of the key issues presented in this chapter is the scope of the addictive process. Is it solely a generic disease process underlying individual addictions or is it also at the heart of the culture? At present there are no answers to these question. To limit the addictive process solely to individuals does not take into account the widespread presence and influence of addictive behavior at institutional and cultural levels. Conversely, to identify the addictive process as the norm of the culture is to make a global statement which is unwieldy at best.

Another aspect of this discussion is the lack of experimental studies and clinical evidence. While a wide variety of empirical research exists regarding the disease process of alcoholism, empirical research on the addictive process as disease process is almost non-existent. The vast bulk of research on the addictive process focuses on clinical observation and theory building. This lack of empirical research reflects the newness of the concept, the lack of widely accepted definitions, and the consequent lack

of adequate research designs. Also contributing to the difficulty of obtaining empirical data is the symptomalogical model on which the concept is based.

The approach adopted by this study is that the addictive process is a generic disease process underlying individual addictions. Further, it is present in every aspect of the culture. While it may not be the dominant style of relating, it is invariably present to some degree in every person and institution in this culture. This is not meant to indicate that it is completely identified with the culture or any aspect of the culture, but it is invariably present. How the addictive process came to be such a pervasive influence will be explored in Chapter 4.

In Catch-22 the world was insane. So-called normal behavior was viewed as full of contradictions which inherently limited freedom and insured an ongoing dance of death. To this point, Catch-22 describes the world much as Anne Wilson Schaef might view it; filled with self-perpetuating personal and institutional contradictions and non-living which shape the way we view reality. I have no argument with this description. As I experience it, reality is filled with contradictions and non-living so as to shape our vision of self, other and creation.

My concern lies with the issue of freedom and the extent to which we are shaped by our addicted and addictive world. The main character in Catch-22 is Yossarian. Yossarian is a bombardier experiencing all the insanity of

war, but the most disturbing thing about Yossarian is that he is sane. He recognizes the insanity that surrounds him and is a part of him, and constantly rebels against it. If we are as heavily influenced by the addictive process as Schaef and others believe, how could Yossarian, or the Yossarian in each of us, exist? The novel represents a spirit of rebellion, sanity, truth, or health which is very much present in our culture, both individually and corporately. In ways, Yossarian represents the sort of paradigm shift which Schaef and others point to. Instead of going along with the way things were, Yossarian began to realize both his own madness and the madness of war. Yet, in the very act of realizing the madness of his world he continued to operate in it, and invite those around him to get clear. That Catch-22 has become a part of our cultural vocabulary is a sign that the addictive process is not as all-consuming as might be believed, and that there is much hope.

CHAPTER 3

Codependence

Tristan and Iseult were so deeply in love they surrendered their lives to their love. While there are many versions of the myth, a consistent element is the chaos their relationship injected into the life of King Mark and the Kingdom of Cornwall. A similar theme exists in the Arthurian legend. In this ancient myth the love between Gwynevere and Lancelot shook the very foundations of Briton by damaging the deep relationship between the King and the land.

These two ancient myths reflect a vision of courtly love between the hero and the women he loves. Both myths contain the symbol of the sword as an awareness of the hero's primary allegiance to the King and the land. In both myths, the hero places his sword between himself and his love indicating his primary allegiance to the king and the land. When this changes, and the hero's primary allegiance shifts from king and land to his love, the sword and all it represents becomes powerless.

These myths and symbols embody sexist beliefs via the rigid roles placed on men and women, thus dealing with issues of identity. The hero and the heroine choose to sacrifice their identities to their relationship. A central theme is that such sacrifice has tremendous power, power

enough to shatter mythic identities and rock kingdoms. Another theme is that such sacrifice of identity demands a terrible price. Typically, the price is the life of the hero, the happiness of the heroine, and the suffering of the King and kingdom.

These two myths spring from a vision of courtly love. The most popular version of the Tristan myth was written by Gottfried Von Strassburg, and appears to have been published in approximately A.D. 1210.¹ The sources of the myth are a fusion of Celtic myth, fairy tale, history, and legend which date back to approximately A.D. 500.

The most popular version of the Arthurian myth was written by Sir Thomas Malory, and published in A.D. 1485.² The sources of this myth are a fusion of Norman-French romances, the English alliterative epic Morte Arthur, and religious myth which also date back to approximately A.D. 500.

These myths are a part of the consciousness of Western civilization. The Tristan myth has been popularized in Richard Wagner's opera Tristan and Isolde, and is a familiar theme in Germanic literature and culture. The Arthurian legend has been popularized in numerous movies, plays, and novels and is a standard in European and North American culture.

¹ August Closs, ed., "Tristan and Isolt" By Gottfried Von Strassburg, xvii.

² Keith Baines, ed., "The Death of Arthur" By Sir Thomas Malory (New York: Bramhall House, 1967).

Both the Tristan and Arthur myths reflect a vision of relationship which is currently called romantic love. It is my belief, and an assertion of this study, that romantic love is codependent love. An initial definition of codependence is that it is an addiction to relationship. This addiction manifests itself through external referenting, focusing on others for value and meaning, an inability to be in relationship without surrendering self, a strong need to be good as defined by another, caretaking, and a sense that one's deep personal meaning is derived from another. In short, codependent love is romantic love as embodied in modern culture and mythic epic.

Were this theme of romantic, codependent love present only in the myths of courtly love, it could be considered a European/North American cultural myth. However, the vision of the hero and the heroine surrendering their life and identity to their love is not limited to the epics and legends of the European Middle Ages. This dance of hero and heroine surrendering their lives to their love dates back to the relationship among Helen, Menelaus, and Paris. In Homer's version of this myth, Helen is happily wed to Menelaus when, aided by the goddess Venus, she and the Trojan hero Paris fall madly in love.³ From their love and elopement to Troy rose the Trojan War and Homer's mythic poems The Iliad and The Odyssey. This epic theme was part

³ George H. Godfrey, ed., Myths and Legends: The Golden Age (Boston: Nickerson, 1960), 261-66.

of the consciousness of the grass roots of the Western world. What is currently referred to as romantic love, or codependent love, has roots not only in the courtly love of the Middle Ages but in the heroic love of ancient Greece and Troy.

The myths of Tristan, Arthur, and Helen of Troy present one aspect of codependence. They point to the ancient tradition of romantic or courtly love. In romantic love both lovers surrender their lives and identities to the relationship. Other mythic presentations of the many facets of codependence include the myth of Narcissus and Echo and the fairy tales of Snow White and Cinderella.

The myth of Narcissus and Echo embodies another facet of codependence. In this myth the talkative nymph Echo offends the goddess Juno. As punishment for her offense Juno declares:

You shall forfeit the use of that tongue with which you have cheated me, except for that one purpose you are so fond of-reply. You shall still have the last word, but no power to speak first.⁴

Soon afterward Echo sees Narcissus walking in the woods, and falls in love with him. Unable to say the first word, Echo follows him closely until he hears her in the underbrush. There begins a very short and frustrating conversation since Echo can only repeat the last word in any sentence spoken by Narcissus. After that day, Echo retreats from the world and lives in caves and canyons. Slowly her

⁴ Godfrey, 124-25.

bones change into rocks until there is nothing left but her voice.

Having been punished for speaking her mind, Echo is nothing but an echo of her love, Narcissus. For a while Narcissus is entertained by this echo, but he quickly grows tired of her and goes his way. The theme of loss of identity and seeking it in another, even as only a shadow of the beloved one, is present in this 2500 year old myth.

The myths of Snow White and Cinderella embody more current visions of codependence and the dysfunctional family dynamics. Snow White is raised by a wicked and narcissistic stepmother. Upon leaving home she surrounds herself with seven asexual men. Later, when she is once again betrayed by a wicked mother figure, she lapses into a deep sleep which can only be broken by the man of her dreams. Present here are the forerunners of modern understandings of dysfunctional families, children of dysfunctional families, and the culturally supported belief that women with such wounded backgrounds can only be rescued by the man of their dreams.

The picture is similar in the fairy tale of Cinderella. In this story, Cinderella is raised by three wicked step sisters. Her only escape from this world is via the world of magic and the kiss of her prince. Present again are the metaphors of the dysfunctional family and the need for rescue by a male figure.

Both Snow White and Cinderella point to the concept of the wounded child. Both Snow White and Cinderella were wounded by their family and sought healing and meaning in the arms of another. These fairy tales point to women as the wounders and the wounded and to men as the rescuers; they reflect modern culture's stereotyping of the roles of men and women. Further, they foreshadow the large number of women who identify themselves as codependent.

According to Carl Jung there are four essential meanings, or layers of meaning, to the concept of Myth.⁵

1. A Myth is a false statement.

2. A Myth is an imaginative narrative. While this type of myth does not express a scientific truth, it still expresses an emotional truth. Jung cites the work of the poets Keats and Milton as examples of literary myths; poetic flights of fantasy that while untrue still express deep emotional truths, such as Lost Horizons or Xanadu.

3. A Myth is a story that confronts the essential and most profound questions of life, meaning, and existence. A myth in this context approaches the questions of What are we?, Where do we come from?, and Where are we going? Jung's most frequently used example of this type of myth is that of the Genesis narrative in its Biblical form. The Genesis narrative is a myth in that it seeks in metaphorical

⁵ William Irwin Thompson, The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1971), 12-14.

language to answer questions of ultimate meaning to human beings.

4. A myth is an archetype recast in images that we can understand. Jung's language here becomes quite esoteric, but William Irwin Thompson equates this understanding of myth to Plato's understanding of The Cave.⁶ In this philosophical myth we, as humans, are chained inside a dark cave. Our heads are fastened in such a way that we can only see the shapes projected onto a screen directly in front of our eyes. While what we see is undeniably real there is a more essential reality beyond our immediate, conscious perceptions. The world outside of our cave, our perceived reality, is the archetypal truth of creation.

At this fourth level, myths are recastings, or retellings, of archetypal realities which are seldom immediately available to the untrained, or unanalyzed, mind. As such, myths are of tremendous importance both to our culture and to our individual lives in that they answer questions of ultimate meaning and express deep cultural and individual truths, or archetypes.

Ancient myths such as Arthur, Tristan, Helen of Troy and Echo and Narcissus express active archetypes, and consequently embody forces which bear on the life of the culture. While not touching on archetypal depths, cultural myths such as Cinderella and Snow White deal with Jung's

⁶ William Irwin Thompson, 24-26.

third level of the word myth by expressing society's vision of who we are in relation to one another.

It would be simplistic to say that the myths I have touched on are somehow foreshadowings of the psychological term codependence. The Homeric myth of the Trojan War did not set out to describe the psychopathology of heroic love. It did, at the level of myth and tradition, set out to paint a picture of the hero, heroic love, and how these forces shaped a world. Embedded in this myth are dynamics which I see as mythic and literary expressions of a human experience which evolved into courtly and romantic love, and is currently understood as codependence. As discussed below, codependence is a concept whose definition is under debate. Yet, what I see in the literature of codependence and the literature of myth are a constellation of similar themes.

Romantic love is a powerful force in our society. Courtly love was a powerful force in Europe during and after the Middle Ages. And heroic love was an integral part of the culture of ancient Greece. Each of these has at its heart an approach to love which is codependent. This is not to say that other visions of love are not present in myth and reality. Rather, what I am pointing to is that romantic love points to codependence as a style of relating.

Without a doubt, the themes found in fairy tales such as Snow White and Cinderella point to broad cultural issues. Thus, to identify them solely with an idea as specific as codependence is inaccurate. However, the relationship

between the dysfunctional family, the wounded child and addictive behavior is well established as a psychological phenomenon. As such, to see in fairy tales, which are myths about who we are, patterns of dysfunctional family life is not surprising.

The term codependent is new. However, the behavior which it identifies is a part of human life, meaning, and existence. This is evidenced by the fact that these behavior are present in our oldest myths. As such, perhaps codependent behavior is at some level archetypal and these myths of romantic, courtly, and heroic love express a common human experience, or, as Jung might say, a cosmic truth about part of the human experience.

The Development of the Concept of Codependence

Just as the study of alcoholism evolved over a period of time, so the study of codependency has evolved. The concept of codependency has its roots in the evolution of the treatment of alcoholism and the understanding of the family as a system. Before the term codependent was coined in the early 1970s, the concept of the enabler or co-alcoholic described persons, primarily the spouse, in a close relationship with an alcoholic. This term evolved out of a growing awareness on the part of alcohol treatment professionals that those around the alcoholic appeared to share many similar behavioral problems as the alcoholic. Research in this area began to appear in the literature in the early 1940s. A current conceptualization of behavioral

issues shared by alcoholics and co-alcoholics is presented by Jael Greenleaf.⁷ Greenleaf identifies specific parallels in alcoholic and co-alcoholic behavior. Included in her research are behavioral parallels which include: grandiosity, lack of trust, blaming/projecting;, judgementalism, lying, depression, flattened affect, withdrawal and acting-out.⁸ Thus, research in the area is ongoing.

Previous to the early 1940s, the alcoholic was identified as the person with the problem. However, as treatment became increasingly sophisticated during the late 1940s and early 1950s the intimate of the alcoholic was recognized as having behavioral issues which warranted treatment. One clinical awareness which led to the treatment of the intimate of the alcoholic was the realization that treatment of the alcoholic alone was less effective than when both the alcoholic and the intimate of the alcoholic were treated.

During the early 1950s, alcoholic treatment programs began a gradual shift away from treating only the alcoholic toward treating both the alcoholic and intimate of the alcoholic. While treatment continued to focus on the alcoholic, the enabling spouse was increasingly involved in treatment. Initially, treatment plans for enablers focused

⁷ Jael Greenleaf, "Co-Alcoholic/Para-Alcoholic: Who's Who?," in Co-Dependency (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1988), 5-17.

⁸ Greenleaf, 11.

on communication skills, anger reduction, and general marital issues. This treatment plan reflected the belief that the behavioral issues of the enabler were due to living with the alcoholic. Gradually, over a period of approximately ten years, treatment for enablers began to resemble treatment for alcoholics. This shift reflected a growing belief that many enablers brought their own behavioral problems into the relationship.

The Enabler as Disturbed or Stressed?

Underlying this shift in focus of treatment was research on the enabling spouse, usually the wife, and the alcoholic family system. Much of this research focused on the question of whether the spouse of the alcoholic was essentially a healthy person who was reacting to living with the alcoholic or had behavioral issues which predated the relationship with the alcoholic. This research, begun in the 1940s, continues to the present. The three empirical questions which appear to be at the heart of this issue are:

1. How does the rate of personality disturbance among wives of active alcoholics compare with the rate of personality disturbance among comparable married women whose husbands are not alcoholics?
2. Does personality disturbance occur in enough wives of alcoholics to warrant generalizing about the wife of an alcoholic as being disturbed?
3. Can one or more patterns of personality function be identified which occur with significantly greater frequency

among wives of alcoholics than among wives of nonalcoholics?⁹

An early and frequently quoted research study was done by Terry Whalen in 1953.¹⁰ Whalen found that wives of alcoholics had poorly developed personalities, and were equal contributors to the destructiveness of the family system. Further, Whalen was among the first in the field of alcoholism to assert that wives of alcoholics are drawn to their alcoholic husbands due to underlying personality characteristics that are essentially self-destructive. In way of summary, Whalen identified four general personality types which she found to recur frequently: the sufferer, the controller, the waverer, and the punisher. Whalen's four personality types broadly parallel the characteristics of codependents.

The weaknesses of Whalen's research are twofold. First, her research was limited to a relatively narrow population of non-psychotic, largely middle class alcoholics involved with the Family Service Agency of Dallas, Texas. Second, her descriptions of the four general personality types were pejoratively titled: Suffering Susan, Controlling Catherine, Wavering Winifred, and Punitive Polly. Such titles betray a negative attitude toward the

⁹ These research questions are referred to in Tadeusz Gieryski and Terence Williams, "Codependency," Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 18, no. 1 (1986): 9-28.

¹⁰ Terry Whalen, "Wives of Alcoholics," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 14 (1953): 632-41.

families of alcoholics which was wide spread during early research on families of alcoholics.¹¹

Even though her research population was limited, Whalen's study greatly influenced the field of alcoholism. Further, her research was not the only early study to support the idea that the enabling spouse had behavioral issues of their own. Another study supporting such a thesis was conducted by David MacDonald in 1956.¹² MacDonald concluded that many spouses of alcoholics had longstanding emotional problems which were effectively disguised by their husband's alcoholic behavior. MacDonald coined the term decompensation to refer to a pattern of behavioral difficulties experienced by wives after their husbands had entered recovery. Without the cover of the husband's alcoholic behavior the enabler was forced to deal with a broader range of experience and cope with their own problems.

A related study on decompensation was published by D.A. Hansen and R. Hill in 1964.¹³ In this study Hansen and Hill suggested that families have only so much emotional room at any time. Thus, during a family crisis, such as an

¹¹ M.B. Bailey, "Alcoholism and Marriage: A Review of Research and Professional Literature," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 22 (1961): 81-97.

¹² David MacDonald, "Mental Disorders in Wives of Alcoholics," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 17 (1956): 282-87.

¹³ D.A. Hansen and R. Hill, "Families Under Stress," Handbook of Marriage and Family, ed. H.T. Christensen (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), 110-28.

alcoholic binge, there is only room for the alcoholic to express emotional disturbance. However, following the cessation of the binge room for the spouse of the alcoholic to express emotional disturbance becomes available in the families emotional economy. Thus, following the cessation of an alcoholic episode the spouse of the alcoholic could abandon her role as the strong one in the family, and express symptoms of disturbance. While the studies cited thus far identify general behavioral patterns of spouses of alcoholics, the focus of this research is more on establishing the presence of patterns than on the exact nature of the behavioral issues.

A wide variety of other studies support the thesis that the enabler entered the alcoholic marriage with significant behavioral issues.¹⁴ Again, while these studies support the idea of the spouse of the alcoholic/addict bringing their own behavioral issues into the marriage, they do not agree on the precise nature of these issues. In fact, research by Peter Steinglass indicates that families of alcoholics are a heterogeneous group.¹⁵

¹⁴ See in particular L.H. Gliedman et al., "Group Therapy of Alcoholics with Concurrent Group Meetings with Their Wives," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 17 (1956): 655-70; Thomas Jacob and Robert Seilhammer, "Alcoholism and Family Interaction," Family Interaction and Psychopathology: Theories, Methods and Findings, ed. Thomas Jacob (New York: Plenum, 1987), 55-74; and Peter Steinglass et al., The Alcoholic Family (New York: Basic, 1987).

¹⁵ For an example of this research see Steinglass, The Alcoholic Family, 327.

In way of summary, the clinical research in this area is limited. However, in contrast to the limited clinical research in this area a large number of experiential works identify common behavior problems of spouses of alcoholics.¹⁶ These works, however, do not provide traditional clinical material to defend their assertions. They are dealt with elsewhere in this study.

In contrast to the studies cited thus far, a significant body of research exists which indicates a lack of emotional disturbance among the spouses of alcoholics. An MMPI study on wives of alcoholics done by J.B. Rae and A.R. Forbes found that the test group fell within a normal range, and suggests that behavioral issues are situational in nature.¹⁷ In the conclusion to the article, Rae and Forbes suggest that the wives of alcoholics are essentially normal individuals reacting to high stress situations.

Two other studies which touch on the stressful nature of the relationship between the enabler and the alcoholic deserve attention. J.E. James and Michael Goldman suggest that the level of stress experienced by the spouse of an alcoholic is directly related to the number of alcoholic

¹⁶ See in particular Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking: For Co-Dependents, Adult Children and Spirituality Seekers (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1985); and Sharon Wegscheider, Another Chance: Hope and Health for the Alcoholic Family.

¹⁷ J.B.Rae and A.R.Forbes, "Clinical and Psychonectic Characteristics of the Wives of Alcoholics," British Journal of Psychiatry 112 (1966): 197-200.

episodes.¹⁸ Though not directly stated in their research, there is a strong implication that much of the emotional disturbance experienced by the spouses of alcoholics is stress related.

Robert Hill also suggests that stress is a key in terms of the emotional status of the spouse of an alcoholic.¹⁹ While Hill's primary focus is on separation issues around war, he also deals with the stress created by treatment for alcoholism. Hill states that much of the emotional disturbance displayed by spouses of alcoholics in treatment is related to adjustment disorders and not long term emotional illness.²⁰

An MMPI study done by R.G. Ballard on wives of alcoholics did not support the hypothesis that there is a greater degree of maladjustment among wives of alcoholics than wives of nonalcoholics.²¹ A similar study conducted by B.F. Corder, A. Hendricks and R.F. Corder indicated that while there were differences on some scales between the

¹⁸ J.E. James and Michael Goldman, "Behavioral Trends of Wives of Alcoholics," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 32 (1971): 562-86.

¹⁹ Robert Hill, Families Under Stress: Adjustments to the Crisis of War and Separation and Reunion (New York: Harper, 1949).

²⁰ For another article which pursues a similar theme see in particular T.J. Paolina et al., "Psychological Disturbances in the Spouses of Alcoholics," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 37 (1976): 1600-608.

²¹ R.G. Ballard. "The Interaction Between Marital Conflict and Alcoholism as Seen Through MMPIs of Marriage Partners," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 29 (1959): 528-46.

experimental group of wives of alcoholics and the control group of wives of nonalcoholics the differences were not significant to justify traditional stereotypes. In their words:

The results bring into question the widely accepted characterization of wives of alcoholics as severely neurotic, disturbed and poorly integrated.²²

An MMPI study conducted by P. Edwards, C. Harvey and P.C. Whitehead indicates that wives of alcoholics do not, as a group, experience significantly higher levels of personality dysfunction than wives of nonalcoholics.²³ The study done by Edwards, Harvey and Whitehead goes so far as to state:

The research on the wives of alcoholics now seems to indicate that they are women who have essentially normal personalities of different types, rather than any particular type. They may suffer personality dysfunction when their husbands are active alcoholics, but if their husbands become abstinent and the periods of abstinence increase, the wives experience less and less dysfunction. Concurrent with these personality fluctuations are changes in the wives' methods of coping with their husbands' drinking patterns and in the roles the wives play within the family. In all of this, these women seem much like other women experiencing marital problems. Until new theoretical perspective or new data are brought to bear on this question, the only tenable proposition about wives of alcoholics is,

²² B.F. Corder et al., "An MMPI Study of a Group of Wives of Alcoholics," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 25 (1964): 551-54.

²³ P. Edwards et al., "Wives of Alcoholics: A Critical Review and Analysis," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 34 (1973): 112-32.

therefore, essentially a null hypothesis-that is, that wives of alcoholics are not unique.²⁴

In several studies, K.L Kogan and J.K. Jackson explored a variety of hypotheses about the level of personality disturbance among wives of alcoholics.²⁵ Their research may be summarized as indicating that:

Measures from the MMPI indicated that, although significantly more wives of alcoholics exhibited some personalty dysfunction than did wives of nonalcoholics, the total number of disturbed subjects was less than half on any measure. . . A major research implication of these findings is that the personality of the wife of the alcoholic should be treated as an important variable rather than a constant. A related implication is the impropriety of the concept 'the wife of the alcoholic.'²⁶

Using a standardized checklist of psychiatric symptoms to measure the impact of alcoholism P. Steinglass concluded that:

both alcoholics and their nonalcoholic mates reported levels of symptomatology higher than those of a normal comparison group but lower than those of psychiatric outpatients.²⁷

²⁴ Edwards, 130-31.

²⁵ K.L. Kogan and J.K. Jackson, "Some Concomitants of Personal Difficulties in Wives of Alcoholics and Nonalcoholics," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 26 (1965): 595-604; K.L. Kogan and J.K. Jackson, "Stress, Personality, and Emotional Disturbance in Wives of Alcoholics," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 26 (1965): 486-95; and K.L. Kogan and J.L. Jackson, "Patterns of Atypical Perceptions of Spouse and Self in Wives of Alcoholics," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 25 (1964): 555-57.

²⁶ Gierymski and Williams, 10.

²⁷ P. Steinglass, "The Impact of Alcoholism on the Family: Relationship Between Degree of Alcoholism and Psychiatric Symptomatology," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 42 (1981): 300.

Finally, after reviewing clinical studies, primarily MMPI research, in this area, Tadeusz Gierymski and Terrence Williams concluded that:

(1) Wives (and possibly other members) in families containing an alcoholic are, as a group, likely to suffer more emotional problems than do spouses of nonalcoholics; (2) The precise degree and form of their emotional problems vary considerably; (3) "the research on the impact of alcoholism on the family, however is still in the rudimentary stage" (Steinglass 1988: 288); (4) No clear-cut clinical entity, corresponding uniquely to the concept of codependency has emerged. . . While the authors of this article are skeptical about the concept of codependency, it must be evident that they are receptive to some realities that are at this time perhaps vaguely subsumed under it. As previously mentioned, the very popularity of this term may mean a growing acceptance of the body of knowledge that has emerged from the modern family movement.²⁸

What may be the most fascinating observation to come out of this review of the literature regarding level of emotional dysfunction of the spouse of the alcoholic is its inconclusiveness. While a variety of MMPI studies indicate generally higher levels of emotional dysfunction among wives of alcoholics, these levels tend not to be statistically significant. In contrast to this research method, Peter Steinglass' use of a standardized checklist of psychiatric symptoms did indicate a statistically significant level of emotional dysfunction. Terry Whalen's interview based research also indicated higher levels of emotional disturbance.

²⁸ Gierymski and Williams, 10-12.

In summary, research on the relative emotional health of enablers is inconclusive. While much of the early research indicates that enablers are less emotionally healthy than the general population later research challenges this position. The three empirical questions posed in Gierymski and Williams remain, in large part, unanswered. With regard to the rate of personality disturbance among wives of alcoholics as compared to wives of nonalcoholics, research findings are mixed. Regarding the issue of the presence of personality disturbance among wives of alcoholics sufficient to warrant generalization that wives of alcoholics are disturbed, research findings are open to both interpretations and the charge that they reflect cultural stereotypes. Finally, as to whether or not one or more patterns of personality function can be identified that characterizes wives of alcoholics, almost no research has been done.

What is pointed to here is the lack of conclusive research, and the danger of sweeping, evaluative statements which result in the creation of stereotypes. In light of the mixed research, individual evaluation of intimates of alcoholics and addicts is standard procedure in most treatment facilities. However, since there is a considerable body of research indicating that intimates of alcoholics have some emotional dysfunction many treatment facilities proceed as if such dysfunction is present.

Beginning in the early 1950s the perspective on alcoholism began to shift from a singular concern with the alcoholic to a broader awareness that the entire family was a part of the dance of alcoholism. A crucial issue here is that while awareness was broadening, treatment continued to focus on the alcoholic. Thus, alcoholism was conceptualized as a primary illness, and the issues of spouse, children, and to some degree extended family were issues of secondary concern. Put another way, while the family was increasingly viewed as part of the disease of alcoholism, the enabler and the children of alcoholic homes were still generally conceptualized as being victims of the alcoholic. While the enabler was increasingly viewed as contributing to the dynamics of alcoholism, alcoholism was still conceived of as the core illness. To some degree this reflected the reality that there was far more research on the alcoholic than on the enabler. However, a far stronger influence was the continued cultural perception of the alcoholic as the person with a problem. At least until the late 1950s, the spouse of the alcoholic was generally viewed as sharing many of the behavioral problems of the alcoholic due to living with the alcoholic. Enabling behavior was not seen as self-active as much as reactive.

This understanding of the enabler and the place of the family in the dance of alcoholism began to shift in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This shift was due to two primary influences: (1) the strong cultural emphasis on the nuclear

family during the 1950s and early 1960s; and (2) the growing influence of family therapy and family systems theory. This shift was slow, and the process continues today, but movement from individual models to family/environmental models began during this period. It is interesting to note that both a surge of interest in family therapy and alcoholism and in the nuclear family in general took place during the 1950s. It may be that post World War II American culture's concern for the nuclear family strongly influenced the conceptualization of alcoholism as a family problem.

Family Therapy and Family Systems Theory

With regard to the development of family therapy and family systems theory, it is important to realize that these areas of study did not simply spring to life in the late 1950s. What is of interest to the present conversation is that the influence of family therapy and family systems theory began to be felt within the field of alcoholism during this period. No author or group of authors can be identified as responsible for the marriage between alcoholism studies and family therapy. M.B. Bailey has done an extensive survey of research in the area of alcoholism and marriage which indicates the strong professional interest in alcoholism and marriage.²⁹ While Bailey does not directly include the broader area of family in his survey of the literature, it is clear from the titles of many of his entries that family issues were an area of

²⁹ Bailey, 81-97.

strong concern. What is most interesting about this particular review is the diversity of approaches and authors represented. This reflects two important issues: 1) The issue of alcoholism and the family was widely recognized during the 1950s and 1960s, and; 2) A wide variety of theoretical orientations addressed the relationship between family dynamics and alcoholism.

What is of concern to my study is that the marriage between family therapy and the field of alcoholism took place, and that the primary effect of this fusion was a growing awareness that alcoholism is a family disease. This awareness was also reflected in the development of such groups as Al-Anon, Al-A-Teen, and Al-A-Tot which focus on recovery issues for family members of an alcoholic family. The first gathering of wives of alcoholics took place in June of 1940.³⁰ This meeting represented the unofficial beginnings of the Al-Anon movement. Over the course of the next twelve years innumerable similar meetings took place which focused on the issues of living with an alcoholic/addict. Finally, in 1952 the first Al-Anon office opened in New York City. In 1955 the first meeting of Al-A-Teen was held at the AA International Convention in St. Louis, and during the late 1950s and early 1960s the first meetings of Al-A-Tot were held. What is reflected in this

³⁰ Al-Anon, Lois Remembers: Memoirs of the Co-founder of Al-Anon and Wife of the Co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous (New York: Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, 1987).

short history is the growth of awareness at a grass roots organizational level that alcoholism is a disease which affects every member of the family.

Al-Anon, various treatment centers and the work of family therapists and theorists in the field of alcoholism were the primary communities in which the issues of alcoholism and the family were studied. A focal issue confronted in each of these settings, as noted in the review of research provided above, was whether the person in relation to the alcoholic was suffering from a primary or situational illness. It was in the midst of these discussions that the concept of the co-alcoholic or co-dependent emerged.

Enabler/Co-Alcoholic/Co-Dependent

Previous to approximately 1970 the spouse or intimate of an alcoholic was generally referred to as an enabler.³¹ Beginning in the early 1970s the terms co-alcoholic or co-dependent also began to be used to describe the person in close contact with the alcoholic.³² The significant shift here is that the term co-dependent or co-alcoholic did not

³¹ Considerable confusion existed during this period regarding the term enabler. The term evolved out of Al-Anon meetings, treatment centers and professional dialogues. At the clinical level the term generally referred to a member of an addictive system who had identifiable behavioral issues of their own. Through the 1960s the source of these behavioral issues was increasingly identified as preceding the alcoholic relationship. However, the term itself focuses on the addict in that its behavioral reference is to the enabler's support of the addicted person.

³² Beth Ann Krier, "Excess Baggage," Los Angeles Times, 14 September 1989: V1, 1.

focus on the alcoholic, but on a set of behavioral criteria around dependency. While this is a subtle shift, it is an important one. The term enabler generally has the alcoholic or substance abuser as the point of reference. The terms co-alcoholic or co-dependent identified issues of dependency as the focus of concern. Further, the terms co-dependent or co-alcoholic can be applied equally to the alcoholic, the intimate of the alcoholic, or family members in that they refer to a set of behaviors around dependency.

Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse identifies the founding of the National Adult Children of Alcoholics in 1983 as being a breakwater in the shift from the term enabler to the concept of co-dependent.³³ The critical shift here was one of clearly identifying family dynamics and issues of dependence and dysfunction instead of the alcoholic as crucial. This shift was taking place throughout the field of alcoholism and other dependencies during the preceding years, but was put into organizational form in 1983.

While clinical studies provided mixed results regarding the level of emotional dysfunction among wives of alcoholics, at the grass roots level of Al-Anon meetings and in treatment centers such dysfunction was increasingly taken as a matter of fact. The theoretical work which paralleled, and possibly supported, this movement was done primarily within treatment environments by recovered alcoholics and treatment specialists, and did not follow traditional

³³ Krier, 20-21.

clinical methodologies.³⁴ Instead of using clinical research designs, research in these settings relied on observations of alcoholics/addicts and their families. These observations and the experience of working with these groups formed the basis on which theoretical models were built. While this method of data collection and theory building is looked down upon in traditional behavioral research settings, it is worth noting that this is the research model used by Sigmund Freud and other early writers in the field of personality theory. This is no way intended to justify the potential for bias and lack of controls in the experiential/observational model. Rather, my purpose here to put some perspective on the harsh criticism leveled at such research by proponents of statistically driven research methodologies.³⁵

Both research models have their strengths and their weaknesses. What is becoming increasingly obvious, though, is that these two groups, if they may be categorized as such, are increasingly working together. Treatment centers are increasingly incorporating psychological evaluations

³⁴ See in particular New York Al-Anon Family Group, The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage (Center City, Minn.: Hazelden Educational Materials, 1971); New York Al-Anon Family Group, One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (Center City, Minn.: Hazelden Educational Materials, 1974); Step Four: Guide to Fourth Step Inventory for the Spouse (Center City, Minn.: Hazelden Educational Materials, 1976); and Emotions Anonymous International Services, Enormity of Emotional Illness-The Hope Emotions Anonymous Has to Offer (St. Paul: Minn.: Emotions Anonymous International, 1973).

³⁵ Gierymski and Williams, 7.

using standardized tests, such as the MMPI, into their intake procedures, and there is increasing interest in academic circles in conversations with treatment specialists. At least part of this shift is due to an increasing acceptance of family systems theory as a legitimate field of research, and not just an interesting theoretical or descriptive model. A further influence in this shift is research which indicates that stereotypes of either alcoholics or wives of alcoholics are a disservice to the diversity of human experience.³⁶

At present the term co-alcoholic is much less prevalent in the literature and common usage because of its reference to the alcoholic. The term enabler continues to be used. However, instead of referring primarily to the intimate of an alcoholic in a diagnostic sense, its use is more general. At present, the term enabler is generally used to describe the behavior of a person who is enabling, ie. covering up, lying for, or otherwise supporting, an addict's behavior.

The term codependent has also gone through considerable evolution. In the early 1970s it generally referred to the dependent behavior exhibited by people close to an alcoholic or substance abuser. As such, it served much the same purpose as the term enabler while focusing specifically on the dependent behavior of the enabler. Over the next ten years the concept of codependence began both to broaden and to describe more specific behavior. Beginning as an idea

³⁶ Bailey, 81-97.

almost exclusively related to the dance of alcoholism, it came to refer to an addiction to relationship, and, by some in the field, to indicate a deeper cultural illness.

Codependency

A Short History

The evolution of the term codependence appears to have involved three phases. The first phase was the identification of the enabler as having a primary behavioral problem which could not be linked exclusively to the stress of living with an addict. This phase identified the enabler as reconstituting earlier abusive experiences in a relationship with an alcoholic. Thus, instead of the enabler's behavior being exclusively reactive to the alcoholic, their behavior was expressing older behavioral patterns. It is this phase which has been the focus of discussion thus far in the chapter.

The second phase was the development of the concept of relationship dependency, and the realization that this form of dependency did not apply only to people involved with alcoholics. The term relationship dependency appears sporadically in the literature of marriage and family and alcohol and substance abuse prior to 1970. Specifically, the term was used to describe the nature of the relationship between the enabling spouse and the alcohol or substance abusing spouse. Beginning in the early 1970s the term began to be used in chemical dependency treatment centers and in informal conversations among professionals to describe an

addiction to relationship not limited to the behavior of an enabling spouse. Thus, instead of describing the character of a relationship between an alcoholic and their spouse, the term came to be used to describe a broader range of behaviors typical of such a relationship, but not limited to them. By approximately 1980 it became apparent that the term relationship addiction was inadequate. Its primary inadequacy was that as treatment specialists and family systems thinkers continued to explore the dynamics of enabling relationships it became apparent that an addiction to relationships was not the core dynamic. While the terms relationship dependency or addiction to relationship continued to be used the term which increasingly came into use was codependence. Since these developments did not take place primarily in academic circles but in treatment centers and among treatment professionals, terminology evolved at an informal level.³⁷ What is of importance, no matter how informally the terminology has evolved, is that the evolution of the term codependence followed the pattern of:

The Spouse of an Alcoholic: Behavioral issues are due to the stress of living with the alcoholic. The alcoholic is the identified patient.

EVOLVED INTO

The Spouse as Enabler: The spouse is reconstituting earlier abusive experiences through the relationship with the alcoholic. While the stress of living in the relationship is a factor, it serves primarily as a catalyst for preexistent behavioral issues. Both the alcoholic and the spouse are involved in the alcoholic system.

³⁷ Pia Mellody, Facing Codependence (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 207-09.

EVOLVED INTO

Relationship Addiction: The behavior which typify an addictive/enabling relationship are not limited to relationships influenced by substance abuse. These dynamics describe a separate but related addiction, to relationship.

EVOLVED INTO

Codependence: The dysfunctional thinking processes and relationship skills of an addict and spouse are manifestations of a broader behavioral dysfunction whose characteristic symptoms are discussed below. The definition and description of this behavioral dysfunction are currently under debate.

One of the critical shifts taking place during this period was the realization that the behavior of the enabler was a primary behavioral problem capable of developing into an addiction, and this behavior was not limited to relationships dominated by alcohol or drug abuse. This primary behavior came to be referred to as codependence. Authors such as Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse³⁵, Stephanie Covington and Liana Beckett³⁹, Charles Whitfield⁴⁰, Laurie and Jonathan Weiss⁴¹, John and Linda Friel⁴², and Janet

³⁵ See in particular Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking; and Wegscheider, Another Chance.

³⁹ Covington and Beckett, Leaving the Enchanted Forest: The Path from Relationship Addiction to Intimacy.

⁴⁰ Charles L. Whitfield, Healing the Child Within: Discovery and Recovery for Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1987).

⁴¹ Laurie Weiss and Jonathan B. Weiss, Recovery from Codependency (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1989).

⁴² Friel and Friel, Adult Children: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families.

Woititz⁴³ explored the concepts of the dysfunctional family and the wounded child and their relationship to the development of dependency issues, in general, and relationship addiction, in particular. This movement also introduced the broader concept of process addictions, tying their development to the same family dynamics underlying the development of substance addictions. Thus, as the concept of codependence developed it raised awareness of the possibility of other non-substance addictions. It is an oversimplification to say that an awareness of codependence was the precursor to an awareness of other process addictions. It does appear that the movement from the concept of the enabler to the idea of codependence was the beginning point of this evolution.

The third step, or phase, is the development of the concept of the addictive process. Its primary proponent, Anne Wilson Schaef, takes the concepts of the dysfunctional family, the wounded child, and addiction and applies them to the culture at large by identifying the White Male System as a dysfunctional family. Thus, the culture itself operates in such a way as to enable substance and process addictions and a variety of other dependency oriented behavior.

As the study of dysfunctional families grew and the relationship between dysfunctional family dynamics and addiction became increasingly clear, it also became clear to

⁴³ Janet Geringer Woititz, Adult Children Of Alcoholics (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1983).

writers such as Schaef that dependence was not rooted solely in family dynamics. Just as the wounded child was embedded in a set of rules taught by a dysfunctional family, so the family was embedded in a larger culture. A focal problem, however, is how to manage such concepts in ways that not only embrace the issues but are precise enough to be usable. Put another way, one of the questions at hand is whether codependence is to be approached primarily as a clinical term, a sociological term, a political term, or some fusion of each of these.

Description and Definition

Much of the debate within the field of codependence focuses on issues of description and definition. One aspect of this difficulty of description and definition is that codependence falls within a class of psychological concepts which addresses both intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics. As noted in the chapter on addiction, this type of interactive theory building is in its infancy. Within the field of codependency, a recurrent issue is that various definitions appear to be either in conflict or competition with each other. Much of this conflict is due to the reality that various definitions put greater emphasis on either intrapersonal or interpersonal aspects of codependence. While the most widely used definitions approach codependence as an integrative concept, each attends more to one level than another depending on the theoretical approach of the author. This subtle shift

creates the impression that the already vague concept of codependence is, in fact, completely unfocused.

For example, Pia Mellody's approach to codependence is clearly integrative, but her emphasis on child abuse and family dysfunctions shifts the balance toward interpersonal factors.⁴⁴ In contrast, Charles Whitfield, whose training is in internal medicine, approaches codependence and adult children of dysfunctional families from a primary disease perspective which emphasizes healing the shame of the wounded child. While clearly recognizing the importance of intrapersonal dynamics, his approach is far more behaviorally oriented than Mellody's. Ruth Fishel has written a fascinating book on the spiritual dynamics of recovery.⁴⁵ While she acknowledges that the sources of substance and process addictions are rooted both in family and interpersonal dynamics, she approaches recovery from an intrapsychic/spiritual perspective. While each of these authors approach codependence from an interactive framework, each focuses on either intrapsychic or interpersonal factors as crucial. None of these authors claim that their work or theory is the final word on codependence, but the simple fact that they are dealing with the same concept in such diverse manners adds further fuel to the fires of confusion over codependency.

⁴⁴ Mellody, 59-194.

⁴⁵ Fishel, The Journey Within: A Spiritual Path To Recovery.

Timmen Cermak emphasizes the importance of moving increasingly toward interactive theories of addiction, in general, and codependence, in particular.⁴⁶ Cermak sees the prototype for such interactive theories in the work of Melanie Klein. Klein introduced the concept of projective identification in 1946.⁴⁷ According to Cermak:

In projective identification, intrapsychic dynamics interface with interpersonal interactions. One person's projections are absorbed and confirmed by another person's behavior. Projective identification is a single, unifying concept that refers to reciprocal interactions between interpersonal and intrapsychic dynamics as well as to the system of interactions linking people together into complementary roles.⁴⁸

Cermak's point is that only by using integrative language and concepts will it be possible to bring together the diverse intrapsychic and interpersonal elements of codependence such that an operational definition can be established. Only when an operational definition has been established will issues of description and definition begin to be resolved. Cermak's efforts at creating such an operational definition will be discussed below.

A second aspect of the difficulty of description and definition is that codependence, like many clinical

⁴⁶ Timmon Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 18, no. 1 (1986): 15-20.

⁴⁷ L. Horowitz, "Projective Identification in Dyads and Groups," International Journal of Group Psychotherapy 33, no. 3 (1983): 259-79.

⁴⁸ Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency", 19.

concepts, began as a grass roots concept. At present it continues to be an idea largely supported by treatment centers, addiction specialists and other mental health professionals who do not work in mainstream academic settings.⁴⁹ One result of this is that many statements about codependence are bare assertions, intuitive statements, overgeneralizations, anecdotes, and experientially based descriptions.⁵⁰ Consequently, precise definitions and DSM-III style diagnostic criteria are still in the process of being created. This lack of academic research is reflected in the number of research projects and journal articles which either focus on or deal with codependence.

In Facing Codependence, Pia Mellody describes a search of psychological abstracts for articles having to do with codependence.⁵¹ Her observation is that prior to 1985 there are no entries in psychological abstracts under the title of codependence. Following that date there are only eight articles pertaining to codependence or codependency.⁵² This relative lack of psychological research stands in stark contrast to the number of books and articles written by treatment specialists. While accurate numbers are not readily available, a review of book, article and pamphlet

⁴⁹ Mellody, 208.

⁵⁰ Gierymski and Williams, 7.

⁵¹ Mellody, 209.

⁵² Mellody, 209.

titles available indicates approximately forty five titles dealing specifically with codependence.⁵³ The vast majority of these are written by treatment professionals outside traditional academic, research circles. Thus, while little clinical research exists on codependence a considerable body of theoretical and experiential work exists. This reflect the reality that codependence is a relatively new concept whose proponents are more likely to be treatments professionals than researchers.

The reality that more experiential description than clinical research exists on codependence needs to be paid attention to. It is irresponsible to simply dismiss codependence based on the fact that no widely accepted operational definition has yet been established. On the other hand, it is also irresponsible to treat codependence as a well defined clinical concept. In its present state of development, codependence is much like a child who is learning to walk. The child is trying to coordinate information about arms, legs, weight, balance, momentum toward standing on their own. It is a clumsy, frustrating period filled with many stops and starts. It is no simple task. Yet, what may be being over looked in this whole conversation is that most every psychological concept covered in the DSM-III-R, using it as the standard diagnostic manual, began with a similar lack of clarity.

⁵³ For a sample bibliography including books, articles and pamphlet see Beattie.

What I am pointing to here is that given its present stage of development and grass roots origins codependence is not unique in its lack of clear definition. What may be unique is the tremendous surge of popularity which surrounds it. Few, if any, psychological concepts have enjoyed the popularity which codependence has garnered in its short history. The reasons for this tremendous popularity are many and complex. As discussed above, the term codependence is the result of the meeting of several streams of thought. In particular, its association with Al-Anon and the family therapy movement along with a general concern for alcoholism in American culture seem to have played large parts in its popularity. Another factor is payment for treatment of addictions by insurance carriers. Put simply, the close association between family treatment for alcoholism and codependence has provided a consistent source of funding. Put bluntly, there is money in codependency.⁵⁴

Literally dozens of descriptions of codependence exist. Each points to issues of relationship dependence, low self-esteem, and the search for external validation as critical to the development of codependence. Further, each identifies issues of poor boundaries, external referenting, a sense of internal emptiness, caretaking, poor or exaggerated sense of personal value, learned helplessness

⁵⁴ Charles Craig [MD., PA., Board Certified in Family Practice], interview with author, 14 December 1988.

and lack of trust in personal perceptions as characteristic of the disease.

It is here that the difference between codependence and healthy interdependency in relationship are best presented. A core of codependence is that the codependent surrenders their sense of personal power, identity and value in order to be in relationship. In healthy interdependency, each partner's sense of personal power, identity and value is enhanced by the relationship. The core of this distinction is that in codependency the person's sense of self, identity or being is reliant upon the person they are dependent on. In healthy interdependency, the person's sense of self, identity or being is intact in such a way that they can choose, or not choose, to be in relationship. In an interdependent relationship there is no need to surrender self to be in relationship. In fact, the person's sense of self is enhanced by the relationship. In interdependent relationships personal boundaries are clear, each person continues to live out of a sense of internal validation and both operate out of a sense of trust of self and other. The result of this clarity of personhood is that each partner can depend both on themselves and the other without becoming dependent. Further, each partner can take care of themselves and the other without becoming entangled in caretaking.

Four descriptions and definitions of codependence are presented by Pia Mellody, Anne Wilson Schaef, and Sharon

Wegscheider-Cruse and Timmen Cermak. I have chosen these four because they represent influential groups or movements within the study of codependence. Pia Mellody is a treatment specialist. Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse is a treatment specialist who has moved into the world of consulting and theory building. Anne Wilson-Schaefer describes herself as a recovering former psychotherapist.⁵⁵ She brings feminist thought, organizational theory, a treatment background, and work in consulting to her theory building. Timmen Cermak is a past president of the National Association for Children of Alcoholics, a medical doctor, and an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry. Cermak focuses on clinical, psychiatric issues within the field of addiction, in general, and codependence, in particular.

Pia Mellody identifies five core symptoms of codependence and their sources as:

SYMPTOM:	SOURCE:
1. Difficulty experiencing appropriate levels of self-esteem:	
Low Self-Esteem.....	Verbal and non-verbal abuse leading to a sense of valuelessness..
Exaggerated Self-Esteem.....	Grandiose self-images or generalized criticism of others.
Other Esteem.....	Based in low self-esteem but with the additional message that esteem can be gained only through external sources (money, prestige,

⁵⁵ Krier, 21.

- possessions, and so forth).
2. Difficulty setting.....Rigid or diffuse family
functional boundaries system resulting in
inconsistent/contradictory
family rules and a consequent
poor sense of self.
3. Difficulty owning one's
reality:
- Body.....Physical or sexual abuse or
family feedback/mentoring
which shamed or denigrated
physicality.
- Thinking.....Denial of personal
perceptions/meaning usually
sourced in rigid, diffuse, or
authoritarian family system.
- Feeling.....Denial or distortion of
feeling reality usually by
rigid or diffuse family
system.
- Behavior.....Inconsistent or distorted
family rules/feedback/
mentoring regarding situation
appropriate behavior or
personal responsibility for
behavior.
4. Difficulty acknowledging
or meeting one's own needs
and wants:
- Dependence.....Expect others to take care of
me sourced in family of
origin caretaking or rigid
boundaries which did not allow
for differentiation and
independence.
- Antidependence.....Meeting own needs without
need of others. Sourced in
family system which supported
invulnerability or
unrealistic independence.

- Needlessness or
Wantlessness.....Denial of personal needs or
wants sourced in rigid or
authoritarian family system
which denied body/feelings.
- Confusion of Wants
and Needs.....Usually connected to a deeply
shaming family system
resulting in low self-esteem.
Often sourced in stating a
need or want which was then
responded to with either abuse
or inconsistency.
5. Difficulty experiencing
and expressing personal
reality in a moderate
manner:
- Body.....Frequently expressed in
immodest or baggy clothing,
sexual acting out or
repression. Frequently
sourced in either physical or
emotional sexual abuse.
- Thinking.....Black/white thinking
frequently sourced in rigid
family systems or in abuse.
- Feelings.....Either wearing one's feelings
on the cuff or lack of
feeling reality. Often
sourced in emotional abuse or
rigid family system.
- Behavior.....Generalized extremes of
behavior with poor ability to
moderate actions.⁵⁶

Pia Mellody deals with the debate over the definition of codependence by entering it only indirectly. Instead of offering a precise definition of codependence she limits her discussion to the five symptoms which she sees as the core

⁵⁶ Mellody, 7-42.

of codependence. Thus, her definition of codependence is the list of behavioral characteristics and sources listed above. This is not an unusual approach for works written by treatment specialists. Mellody's issue is the treatment of codependence, not its theoretical underpinnings. As such, she is an excellent example of the way treatment professionals approach codependence. Her issue is to describe and treat this behavioral phenomenon which confronts her daily in her work. Issues of theory and research are secondary.

While Pia Mellody does not lay out a clinical diagnostic framework for codependence, there is a clear sense for a person to be labeled codependent they must exhibit a clear pattern of disturbed relationship with self and others based on the above framework. A clear theme in her thinking is that codependence begins in early childhood damage to self-image which generates a sense of personal helplessness and powerlessness. One of Mellody's unique contribution to the study of codependence is her broadening of the concept of child abuse. It is here that she approaches Anne Wilson Schaef's concern with the cultural context of codependence. Mellody sees many traditionally accepted childrearing practices as abusive, particularly in the realm of emotional abuse. While she does not enter the realm of social analysis, she implies that many socially accepted, control oriented childrearing practices are abusive and a source of codependence.

Another uniqueness of Mellody's approach is her presentation of spiritual abuse within the context of codependence.⁵⁷ While other writers discuss the crucial place of spirituality in codependence, Mellody addresses the issue of spirituality in the context of abuse. Spiritual abuse, as understood by Mellody, occurs when: (1) a parent(s) replaces a child's God, or Higher Power; (2) a child's parent or parents are addicted to religion; or (3) a child is abused, either emotionally or physically, by a religious representative. The crucial issue for Mellody is abuse. When a child is abused by a parent or significant other, that person is saying to a child that they, not God, are all-powerful and ultimately in control of their life. This message is clearly communicated in physical abuse, but is also present in emotional abuse. When a child is abused emotionally the abuser is saying to the child they are all-powerful, and may abuse, manipulate, control, judge, blame, reject or accept the child as they wish. As is apparent, this is a matter of degree given the power difference between adults and children. Mellody believes that physical spanking frequently, if not always, functions as abuse in that the implicit message amplifies the power difference between the two. Emotional abuse is all the more difficult to assess. One shortcoming of her work is that Mellody never provides a precise definition of where she believes natural power differences become abuse. This illustrates well a

⁵⁷ Mellody, 181-93.

difficulty inherent in an observational style of research and theory building.

One difficulty with Mellody's approach to codependence is that a wide variety of behavioral issues are covered in her five core symptoms of codependence. While a pattern of disturbed relationship with self or other around her 5 core symptoms is the crucial diagnostic element, she provides no clinical boundaries or guidelines for diagnosis. As such, her description is open to considerable misinterpretation. She does, however, break down the wide variety of symptoms of codependence into body, thinking, feeling, and behavior categories thus lending some specificity to her work.

Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse presents a description of codependence which is similar to Pia Mellody's, but whose sources are slightly different. While Mellody focuses on issues of early childhood abuse in a broad sense, Wegscheider-Cruse focuses on the abuse inherent in an alcoholic family system. Their basic descriptions of codependency are similar. However, while Mellody relates codependence to early childhood abuse, Wegscheider-Cruse focuses on two distinct but related sources: (1) the dynamics of alcoholic families; and (2) family secrets, traumas, rigidity and dogma.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking, 6.

Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse's description of codependence includes:

1. An inability to have spontaneous fun.
2. Problems with intimacy, particularly over issues of trust.
3. Difficulties identifying normal behavior.
4. An exaggerated need for the approval of others-both intimates and strangers.
5. Poor decision-making abilities.
6. Exaggerated anxiety over change.
7. Black and white thinking.
8. Poor contact with personal feelings-anger in particular.
9. Exaggerated fear of abandonment.
10. Caretaking, and entering relationships with needy people.
11. An exaggerated need to control self and others.⁵⁹

In addition to this list of characterizations of a codependent lifestyle Wegscheider-Cruse identifies key sources of codependency as:

1. Being raised in an intimate relationship with an addict.
2. Being raised in a family with a secret(s). Family secrets indicate that the primary family coping mechanism is denial.
3. Being raised in a rigid family environment dominated by dogma rather than creative openness.
4. Being raised in a family that teaches learned helplessness. Learned helplessness is fostered through manipulation, control, sarcasm, intimidation, or loving a child in such a way as to foster inappropriate dependence.

⁵⁹ Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking, 3-4.

5. Being raised in a family which controls behavior and disperses love through reward systems and emotional repression. Such a system creates an environment of fear and manipulation.
6. Being raised in an environment filled with unspoken expectations. Such vague rules and expectations foster low self-esteem and fear of failure.
7. Being raised in a chaotic environment. Whether the chaos is emotional or physical the result is an enduring sense of fear which embodies the message that life is not safe.
8. Being raised in an environment filled with entangled relationships. This form of chaos does not respect the need for individuation and demands that the person live a reactive lifestyle.

Wegscheider-Cruse also outlines a developmental path which codependency follows in adults. While general, it provides a basic outline of how codependency progresses.

Stage One: Dependent Bonding

This stage reflects the near universal human experience of attachment. In many ways this experience mirrors early childhood attachment with either mother, father or another significant caregiver. In most adults this experience of bonding is a normal process which is often reciprocal and mutually beneficial. However, for the codependent this bonding becomes increasingly intense and one-sided, and in the face of this one-sidedness the codependent finds detachment almost impossible.

Stage Two: Fear

When the codependent experiences the significant other not responding the way they would like them to, they experience a sense of fear. This fear focuses on abandonment. Out of this fear of abandonment the codependent often reacts by doing whatever appears necessary to keep the significant other close. This may manifest itself through guilting or attacking behavior or through pleasing behavior. Irrespective of the approach, the core of this reactive behavior is control and manipulation.

Stage Three: Emotional Paralysis

Continuing to live out of the fear of loss the codependent enters a period of frozen feelings. This stage is composed of two phases. Phase one focuses on stuffing or

denying feelings. "If I don't get angry, then she won't leave me." might be the motto of this stage. At some point, phase one evolves into phase two, emotional paralysis. In this stage the codependent feels nothing. They lose the ability to feel joy, be spontaneously alive, or respond to the world around them with appropriate feelings.

Stage Four: Behavioral Stuckness

Eventually, "stuckness" becomes the hallmark of the co-dependent. Feeling extremely vulnerable, the co-dependent person assumes fixed behavioral stances, protective defenses, repetitious, ritualistic patterns of behavior. . . In Stage Four, the co-dependent loses the ability to be objective about his/her life, loses the ability to step back and see clearly what is happening - the stuckness, the self-destructive rituals, and the ever-present incapacitating fear.⁶⁰

Wegscheider-Cruses definition of codependence has evolved over the past several years. In a 1984 essay in *Co-Dependency: An Emerging Issue* she defines codependency as "a primary disease and a disease within every member of an alcoholic family."⁶¹ In her 1986 book Choicemaking: For Co-Dependents, Adult Children and Spirituality Seekers she defines co-dependence as

a specific condition that is characterized by preoccupation and extreme dependence (emotionally, socially, and sometimes physically) on a person or object. Eventually, this dependence on another person becomes a pathological condition that affects the codependent in all other relationships.⁶²

Expanding upon this basic definition she states in the same work that:

⁶⁰ Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking, 19-25.

⁶¹ Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse, "Co-Dependency: The Therapeutic Void," in Co-Dependency (Deerfield Beach: Fla.: Health Communications, 1984), 1.

⁶² Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking, 2.

Co-dependency is a lifestyle, a patterned way of relating to others. It's a way of interpreting experiences. And it's a lifestyle with low self-esteem at the core.

Co-dependents suffer from a progressive focusing of attention on a target and a concomitant neglect of one's own feelings and needs.⁶³

In her most recent work, The Miracle of Recovery: Healing for Addicts, Adult Children and Co-dependents, published in 1989, Wegscheider-Cruse states that:

Co-dependency is a disease. It is a specific condition characterized by preoccupation and extreme dependency on another person (emotionally, socially, sometimes physically) or on a substance (such as alcohol, drugs, nicotine and sugar) or on a behavior (such as workaholism, gambling, compulsive sexual acting out). This dependence, nurtured over a long period of time, becomes a pathological condition that affects the co-dependent in all other relationships.⁶⁴

She further states that:

My own definition of co-dependency is that it is a toxic relationship to a substance, a person or a behavior that leads to self-delusion, emotional repression and compulsive behavior that results in increased shame, low self-worth, relationship problems and medical complications.⁶⁵

The definition of addiction which I am using in this study is that addiction is the compulsive use of any substance, or compulsive participation in any process, characterized by loss of control over use and the securing

⁶³ Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking, 3.

⁶⁴ Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse, The Miracle of Recovery: Healing for Addicts, Adult Children and Co-Dependents (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1989), 35.

⁶⁵ Wegscheider-Cruse, The Miracle of Recovery, 37.

of its supply, and a high tendency to relapse after withdrawal. It appears that Wegscheider-Cruses' definition of codependency differs little from this author's operational definition of addiction. This issue will be discussed below and at the end of this chapter.

Much like Pia Mellody, Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse sees codependency as an illness whose heart is damaged self-esteem. While her focus differs from Mellody, the same themes of learned helplessness, damage to self, and external referenting appear. Both use the term dysfunctional family, the difference is that Wegscheider-Cruse's interest is focused more on the specific field of alcoholism while Mellody is more interested in child abuse and family systems as these relate to addiction. Wegscheider-Cruse, however, does not limit her work to alcoholic families. Versed in family dynamics and family systems theory, she finds that many of the dynamics which exist in alcoholic families exist in the larger area of dysfunctional family systems. This is both a strength and a weakness of her work. She is attempting to establish that dysfunctional family dynamics, whether alcoholic or not, result in a broad variety of individual dysfunctions, particularly alcoholism, drug addiction, and codependence. Once again the issue of definition comes into play in that it is difficult to determine what is addictive behavior, what is codependent behavior, when the two are the same, and when they are different. Key, however, is that she sees addictions,

whether to alcohol, drugs, or relationships, sourced in early childhood experiences which fostered low self-esteem, external referenting, and learned helplessness.

As discussed below, Timmen Cermak believes that the reason addictive and codependent behavior are difficult to sort out is they are the same personality disorder. Cermak would agree with Wegscheider-Cruse that codependence is essentially a disease whose core is damage to self-esteem. Cermak, however, states more clearly that damage to self-esteem expresses itself in certain characteristic behavior, is present in all addictions, and that certain of these are common to codependence and addiction. Thus, alcoholism, drug addiction, process addictions and codependence share behavioral styles focusing on perfectionism, denial, control and dishonesty. The primary differences center more around choice of addictive agent than style of relating. Thus, Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse and Timmen Cermak treat codependence both as a dynamic which underlies all addictive behavior and as a specific addiction. Cermak is simply clearer about his perspective than Wegscheider-Cruse.

It is here that much of the confusion around codependence centers. Is codependence a specific addiction or is it a dynamic present in all addictions? In common use, the term codependent frequently describes individuals whose primary addictive issues focus on relationship. When used this way it refers to an addiction to relationship. However, writers such as Wegscheider-Cruse or Cermak use the

term to refer to a broad based style of relating typical of all addicted persons. Thus, these authors view codependence both as a specific addiction, typically referred to as relationship addiction, and as a set of behavior descriptive of addiction. Hence the confusion.

The primary weakness of Wegscheider-Cruse's understanding of codependence is that she fails to provide clear definitions of addiction and codependence from her family systems perspective. As discussed below, Cermak approaches codependence from a more behavioral, personality dysfunction perspective. This allows him to separate codependence, as a personality disorder, from addiction, as a separate disorder.

While not going as far as Schaef, in terms of making codependence a sociological phenomenon, Cermak treats codependent behavior in much the same manner Schaef envisions the addictive process. The difference is that Schaef sees the addictive process both as a disease process and lifestyle while Cermak focuses on lifestyle, or personality disorder, issues. It is primarily a difference of scope, language and theoretical orientation. Anne Wilson-Schaef uses sociological, philosophical and some family systems language to identify codependence as an expression of an underlying disease process. Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse uses family systems and addiction language to identify codependence as rooted in low self-esteem born of dysfunctional families. Timmen Cermak uses more

traditional DSM language and categories to view codependence as a personality disorder common to most addicts and their families.

Anne Wilson Schaef presents a summary of the characteristics of co-dependence which is quite similar to those of Pia Mellody, Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse and others in the field.⁶⁶ The uniqueness of Schaef's perspective is that instead of focusing exclusively on family dynamics as the source of codependence she focuses on cultural sources as well. While acknowledging that family dynamics play a large part in the development of codependence and other addictions, Schaef focuses on the cultural dynamics of addictions in general and codependence in particular. Her description of the characteristics of codependence is as follows:⁶⁷

1. External Referenting:

A. Relationship Addiction--The codependent uses relationships to get a fix in the same way an addict uses a drug to escape their personal reality.

B. Cling-Clung Relationships--Investment in relationships which provide security at the cost of personal freedom and responsibility. Both parties cling to each other for safety, and create a static, non-growing relationship.

C. Lack of Boundaries--Taking their cues about external and internal reality from others, the codependent does not know where they end and others begin. They literally take

⁶⁶ For other perspectives on and lists of the characteristics of codependents see Friel and Friel, Adult Children: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families, 17-30; Woititz, Adult Children of Alcoholics, 23-54; and Whitfield, Healing the Child Within, 17-58.

⁶⁷ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 44-63.

on what others think, feel, know, need and want as their own.

D. Impression Management--Lacking internal referents it becomes absolutely to manage how others see them. This results in a strong tendency toward a nice guy, people pleasing image as a way of creating a sense of self-worth.

E. Not Trusting Your Own Perceptions--Lacking a sense of personal value, the codependent will surrender their perceptions of reality in deference to those of others. This results in a highly polished ability to read others and reflect their perceptions or beliefs.

2. Caretaking:

A. Making Yourself Indispensable--Lacking a belief in their intrinsic worth, codependents will make themselves indispensable to others by taking care of them. Consequently, they create relationships characterized by cross dependency.

B. Being a Martyr--Codependents suffer for holy causes, such as keeping their family together, and consequently come to see self-sacrifice as the caring thing to do.

3. Physical Illness--In trying to control the uncontrollable, codependents overstress their bodies and develop a variety of stress-related illnesses.

4. Self-Centeredness--Codependents personalize everything related to their significant other. This reflects a subtle belief they are the center or cause of everything, and thus are somehow responsible for everything.

5. Control Issues--Codependents are supreme controllers. They believe they can and should be able to control everything. . . All of these attempts to control the uncontrollable lead to tremendous depression, because codependents view themselves as failures when they cannot control everything.⁶⁸

6. Feelings:

A. Being Out of Touch with Feelings--As their fear and frustration mount over not being able to be in control of creation, in general, and significant others, in particular, codependents increasingly stuff their feelings. When they do express feelings they often come out in ways inappropriate to the situation.

⁶⁸ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 56-57.

B. Distorted Feelings--Codependents frequently learn that only so-called acceptable feelings, such as love and patience, are acceptable. Consequently, they must distort their own feelings to meet these rigid expectations. Further, when feelings are repressed, anger and depression tend to build and express themselves in unexpected and disproportionate ways.

7. Dishonesty--The codependent lifestyle is fundamentally dishonest in that it denies feelings, demands distortion of those feelings allowed, works with impression management, and focuses on fulfilling the needs of others. This generalized dishonesty is also self-perpetuating in that neither internal nor external challenges are allowed into awareness.

8. The Need to be the Center of Others Lives--Co-dependents fear abandonment and need to be involved in every aspect of the lives of their significant others.⁶⁹

9. Gullibility--Co-Dependents tend to believe almost anything they are told, especially if it fits the way they want things to be. . . Co-Dependents are notoriously bad judges of character, because they see what they want to see and hear what they want to hear.⁷⁰

10. Loss of Morality--A central feature of codependence is giving away whatever sense of personal values and sense of self one has developed. At its core, codependence is a spiritual disease in that it demands we surrender who we are in order to be what we perceive someone else wants/needs us to be.

11. Fear--The fear of abandonment is a basic building block in the codependent lifestyle. Fear has such power in the life of the codependent because if the codependent loses the significant other, be that a person or an institution, they have lost their frame of reference. They are then forced into a position where they must either develop their own or quickly find another.

12. Rigidity--Rigidity is the logical consequence of a lifestyle dominated by fear. Co-dependents try desperately to hold on to the illusion of the world they have built, and their rigidity is an indicator that they are "into their disease."⁷¹

⁶⁹ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 60-61.

⁷⁰ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 61.

⁷¹ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 63.

13. Judgmentalism--Judgmentalism is a consequence of the codependents low self-esteem, fear, inability to control the world, and personal moral confusion. It reflects their desperate attempt to control a world which is beyond their control.

It is not possible to determine a precise definition of codependence based on Schaef's larger understanding of the addictive process. Codependence, for Schaef, is the manifestation of the addictive process which expresses itself as an addiction to relationship. Thus, her presentation of the characteristics of codependence in light of her understanding of the addictive process serves as her definition of codependence. Put simply, the addictive process is a culturally supported disease process/lifestyle which supports and rewards fix-oriented coping styles.

Codependence is the manifestation of this disease process which expresses itself as an addiction to relationship. The specific manifestation of this addiction to relationship were presented above. How this understanding of codependence relates to my operational definition of addiction and to Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse and Timmen Cermak's definitions of codependence will be discussed below.

Schaef's evaluation of the role of family dynamics in the development of codependence differs little from elements presented by Pia Mellody and Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse. The only significant difference is that of depth. While Mellody and Wegscheider-Cruse go into considerable depth regarding the place of family dynamics, Schaef is less interested in

this aspect of codependence than she is in larger cultural issues.

Schaeff's uniqueness is her examination of the institutional roots of codependence. Paying particular attention to frozen feelings, perfectionism, dishonesty, distorted feelings and thinking and low self-esteem she outlines the role of education and the church in the development of codependence.⁷² The core of her presentation is that each of these institutions teaches and rewards external referenting, other centeredness, low self-esteem, and a preference for thinking rather than feeling. Using Schaeff's language, the institutions of education and the church promote non-living. In The Addictive Organization she extends this critique to include organizational theory as a means of illustrating how common business practices enable addictive behavior.⁷³

Since I have critiqued Schaeff's ideas elsewhere in this study, I will not go into detail regarding the strengths and weaknesses of her approach. Put simply, she identifies White Male System thinking with the addictive process, in general, and codependent living, in particular. While this is a fascinating concept, it is so broad and philosophical that it makes refining codependence into a usable clinical concept almost impossible. Schaeff is clearly investing her

⁷² Schaeff, Co-Dependence, 67-86. For a specific presentation of self-esteem issues involving the church and theology see Schaeff, Women's Reality, 161-9.

⁷³ Schaeff, The Addictive Organization.

energy in the interpersonal aspects of codependence. While she describes codependence in terms of individual dynamics, she touches only briefly on how it is developed by an individual within a family system. Rather, her emphasis is on how cultural institutions, such as education, the church, and broader cultural dynamics, such as White Male Thinking, support such ways of being. In short, her approach, as stated earlier, is so global that codependence becomes a vague clinical\philosophical\sociological concept.

Still, Schaef's points regarding social and cultural influences fit comfortably in a systems understanding of human behavior. As pointed out by Cermak⁷⁴, codependency fits within a category of psychological phenomenon which include both interpersonal and intrapsychic dynamics. What Schaef is doing is stretching the interpersonal from family systems levels to cultural levels. The problem with this stretching is that current models of human behavior have difficulties integrating family and intrapsychic dynamics much less family, intrapsychic and cultural/philosophical ones.

Perhaps the most intentional effort at describing codependence in terms of traditional DSM diagnostic categories⁷⁵ is that of Timmen Cermak in his article "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency" in Journal of

⁷⁴ Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," 18-19.

⁷⁵ American Psychiatric Association, 1987.

Psychoactive Drugs⁷⁶ and his book Diagnosing and Treating Co-Dependence.⁷⁷ Cermak believes that the unquestioned assumptions that an alcoholic approaches life with, theism's of alcoholism, are essentially the same as those of the codependent.⁷⁸ At the core of these common belief systems are, according to Cermak, deeper personality dysfunctions centering around damage to self-esteem and an attempt to seek meaning and value externally.

Where Cermak differs from many other authors in the field of codependence is his sense of urgency that codependence be refined such that it can be understood in the language of the DSM-III-R.

While the diagnosis of codependence has been of pragmatic value in the alcoholism field, it has not been integrated into the standard nomenclature set forth in DSM-III (American Psychiatric Association 1980). Such an inclusion would be premature until the following have been accomplished: (1) a definition of codependency with objective criteria for the diagnosis is developed on a level of sophistication at least equal to other diagnostic categories in DSM-III; and (2) research using adequate diagnostic criteria is undertaken to verify the existence of codependency as a reliable and valid entity.⁷⁹

Cermak argues that the first step toward establishing codependence as a DSM-III style diagnostic category is the

⁷⁶ Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," 15-19.

⁷⁷ Timmen Cermak, Diagnosing and Treating Co-Dependence: A Guide for Professionals Who Work With Chemical Dependents, Their Spouses and Children (Minneapolis: Johnson Institute, 1986).

⁷⁸ Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," 15.

⁷⁹ Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," 16.

creation of a DSM-III style operational definition . Only then is it possible to conduct research to verify whether or not it a reliable and valid diagnostic category. Cermak believes that codependency can be defined as a disorder within the DSM-III-R criteria for Mixed Personality Disorder (301.98). In the style of the DSM-III-R, Cermak outlines five diagnostic criteria for codependence as:

(1) continual investment of self-esteem in the ability to influence/control feelings and behavior in self and others in the face of obvious adverse consequences; (2) assumption of responsibility for meeting other's needs to the exclusion of acknowledging one's own needs; (3) anxiety and boundary distortions in situations of intimacy and separation; (4) enmeshment in relationships with personality disordered, drug dependent and impulse disordered individuals; and (5) exhibits (in any combination of three or more) constriction or emotions with or without dramatic outbursts, depression; hypervigilance, compulsions, anxiety, excessive reliance on denial, substance abuse, recurrent physical or sexual abuse, stress-related medical illness, and/or primary relationship with an active substance abuser for at least two years without seeking outside support.⁸⁰

Criterion one combines characteristics present in Alcohol Dependence (303.9x) and Dependent Personality Disorder (301.60).

Repeated efforts to control the effects of ingesting alcohol in spite of social and physical complications arising from such efforts lie at the core of active alcohol dependence. The failure of one's efforts to control the situation are interpreted as signs of one's inadequacy, rather than signs of an unrealistic sense of what can actually be controlled by force of will.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," 18.

⁸¹ Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," 17.

Codependents also experience low self-esteem and self-confidence similar to that found in Dependent Personality Disorder. The common core here is an investment of self-esteem in the behavior of others.

Criterion two is copied directly from Dependent Personality Disorder. Criterion three is based on Borderline Personality Disorder (301.83). Here the individual has problems tolerating solitude for even short periods of time and also manifests disturbances of identity. However, unlike true borderline personalities who are unable to maintain clear ego definition in relation to other, codependents voluntarily blur their boundaries in their attempt to achieve and maintain intimacy. This characteristic of relationship is often referred to as enmeshment in family systems language.

Criterion four is a combination of the unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characteristic of Borderline Personality Disorder with the types of disturbances of relationship found in Histrionic Personality Disorder (301.50). Cermak points particularly toward romantic fantasy, emotional excitability and role caricature as typical both of borderlines and codependents.⁸²

Criterion five is a list of characteristics which embraces issues including those covered under Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (309.81), Compulsive Personality Disorder (301.40) and Disorders of Impulse Control. In particular,

⁸² Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," 17.

Cermak points out that when codependents compulsively use alcohol or other substances or processes they are manifesting alcoholism.

It is a disservice to make large distinctions between alcoholics and codependents. Such distinctions lead to confusion among family members regarding what is alcoholic thinking versus codependent thinking, when all family members are guilty of precisely the same distortions.⁸³

Cermak's attempt at a DSM-III type classification is impressive. It is impressive partly because not only does he point out the strengths of his formulation, but is aware of its weaknesses. He points, in particular, to the reality that his work is a cut and splice approach to diagnosis within the DSM-III-R, and that Mixed Personality Disorder is a loosely defined category in itself. Further, he acknowledges that certain aspects of codependence simply do not fall within traditional DSM-III-R categories. For example, Cermak sees codependents as exercising a distorted sense of will power in their efforts to control others, and this issue is not central to any of the DSM-III-R categories he refers to.⁸⁴ In fact, this sense of distorted willpower is central to his understanding of codependence in that he believes that power through sacrifice of self lies at the core of co-dependence.⁸⁵ While present in the chemical dependence category, the issue of distorted relationship to

⁸³ Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," 17.

⁸⁴ Cermak, "Diagnostic Criteria for Codependency," 19.

⁸⁵ Cermak, Diagnosing and Treating Co-Dependence, xii.

willpower is not central to the diagnosis. It is here that Cermak pushes the boundaries of the DSM-III framework in that no diagnostic framework approximates the centrality of distorted relationship to willpower, denial, damage to self-esteem and identity confusion which Cermak sees as central to codependence. Thus, he is forced to creatively cut and paste within traditional DSM-III categories. This also reflects the reality that the DSM-III is primarily based on intrapersonal understandings of human behavior, and not on interactive ones.

One further subject regarding diagnostic issues which merits note is the difference between a personality trait and disorder. A personality trait is an enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself which is exhibited in a wide range of important social and personal contexts.⁵⁶ Personality traits become disorders when they are inflexible and maladaptive and cause either significant impairment in social or occupational functioning or subjective distress.⁵⁷ This is important to note in that a frequent criticism of codependence is that it is such a ubiquitous term that everyone demonstrates it to some degree.⁵⁸

What Cermak accomplishes is to provide a specificity of diagnosis which other authors referred to in this study have

⁵⁶ American Psychiatric Association, 305.

⁵⁷ American Psychiatric Association, 305.

⁵⁸ Cermak, Diagnosing and Treating Co-Dependence, 9-10.

not. While incomplete and lacking in precision relative to accepted DSM-III-R categories, it is an improvement over most formulations of codependence. It needs to be mentioned that the presentations of codependence provided by Pia Mellody, Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse and Anne Wilson Schaef are not attempts at creating diagnostic categories as much as descriptive efforts aimed at providing the lay of the land. The difference between these two styles is much like the difference between a Rand McNally Road Map and a United States Geological Service topographic map. While Rand McNally provides an outstanding map for motorists, the USGS map can be used by motorists, hikers, geologists, physicists, and a wide variety of other professionals in need of information about the land.

An Operational Definition of Codependence

Codependence describes both a specific addiction to fix-oriented relationships, most often referred to as relationship addiction, and a personality disorder which is present in all addictive behavior. My operational definition of codependence as a personality disorder is that created by Timmen Cermak.

Co-dependence is a recognizable pattern of personality traits, predictably found within most members of chemically dependent families, which are capable of creating sufficient dysfunction to warrant the diagnosis of Mixed Personality Disorder as outlined in DSM-III-R.

The diagnostic criteria for Co-Dependent Personality Disorder are as follows:

A. Continued investment of self-esteem in the ability to control both oneself and others in the face of serious adverse consequences.

- B. Assumption of responsibility for meeting others' needs to the exclusion of acknowledging one's own.
- C. Anxiety and boundary distortions around intimacy and separation.
- D. Enmeshment in relationships with personality disordered, chemically dependent, other co-dependent, and/or impulse disordered individuals.
- E. Three or more of the following:
 1. Excessive reliance on denial
 2. Constriction of emotions (with or without dramatic outbursts)
 3. Depression
 4. Hypervigilance
 5. Compulsions
 6. Anxiety
 7. Substance abuse
 8. Has been (or is) the victim of recurrent physical or sexual abuse
 9. Stress-related medical illnesses
 10. Has remained in a primary relationship with an active substance abuser for at least two years without seeking outside help.⁹⁹

Specific examples and illustrations of codependence as a specific addiction to fix-oriented relationships have been provided above. While there are differences in the descriptions of behavior typical of codependents provided by Schaef, Wegscheider-Cruse, Mellody, and Cermak, these differences are not significant. Each addresses major themes from slightly different perspectives.

The definition of addiction used in this study is that addiction is the compulsive use of any substance, or compulsive participation in any process, characterized by loss of control over use and the securing of its supply, and a high tendency to relapse after withdrawal. Within this

⁹⁹ This portion of my operational definition is taken from Cermak, Diagnosing and Treating Co-Dependence, 1, 11.

framework, codependence is an addiction in that it is the compulsive participation in externally directed, fix oriented interpersonal relationships, characterized by a loss of control and a high tendency to re-create such relationships following withdrawal.

While this understanding of codependence focuses on the individual, codependence is also a cultural phenomenon. This is reflected both in its presence in our oldest myths and in its current manifestation as romantic love. This does not mean that I see our culture as diseased. Rather, I see Western European and North American culture(s) as supporting personality traits which are distinctly codependent. This does not mean that every time a person participates in a behavior which falls within the range of the above definition that they are codependent. Rather, it means that our culture supports behavior traits which are codependent. The distinctions between codependence as a constellation of personality traits and disease and as a cultural dynamic will be discussed in the following section.

The relationship of codependence to other addictions and the addictive process may be summarized as follows. The addictive process describes a generic, fix-oriented disease process which underlies all addictions. It describes the process by which all addictions develop, and in particular identifies externally directed, fix-oriented coping styles which follow a specific developmental path as underlying all addictions.

As stated above, codependence describes both a specific addiction to fix-oriented relationships, most often referred to as relationship addiction, and a personality disorder which is present in all addictive behavior. Here I am agreeing both with Anne Wilson-Schaefer and Timmen Cermak's understandings of codependence. I agree with Schaefer that codependence is the manifestation of the addictive process which presents itself as an addiction to fix oriented relationships. I also agree with Cermak that codependence is a personality disorder which is present in all addictive behavior. Regarding Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse, I believe her mixing of addiction and codependence confuses the issue more than clarifying it. However, her description of codependent behavior as it develops out of the experience of growing up in a dysfunctional family is quite accurate. I believe that addiction is a separate mental disorder from codependence. However, I agree with Cermak that codependence describes the relational style used by addicts. Thus, codependence is a behavioral term focusing on intrapersonal issues whereas addiction refers more specifically to compulsivity, loss of control, withdrawal symptoms, tolerance, and relapse.

An alcoholic is by definition also codependent, but a codependent is not necessarily an alcoholic. A person may be addicted to a variety of substances and processes, but the quality and style of relating--the perfectionism, denial, constriction of emotion and dishonesty which characterizes an addict's interpersonal style--is

codependence. A person may also be a codependent without having other substance or process addictions. When this is the case, the person's primary addiction is to fix oriented relationships as described in the operational definition.

Since the realm of the DSM-III-R has been entered in this study as a framework for understanding codependence, the issue of Axis I and Axis II diagnoses must be addressed. Axis I diagnoses are generally composed of what the American Psychiatric Association officially recognizes as mental disorders. Generally speaking, these include all severe psychological or behavioral problems which tend to motivate a person to seek therapy. Psychoactive Substance Use Disorders, addictions, are included in this category. Axis II diagnoses are generally composed of developmental disorders and personality disorders. The purpose of this category of diagnosis is to designate a patient's psychological traits or enduring patterns of behavior rather than the presenting problem, mental disorder or clinical syndrome. According to a traditional interpretation of the DSM, personality disorders cannot be included as an Axis I diagnosis. However, in this dissertation the conceptualization of codependence as a personality disorder defines it as a primary mental disorder or clinical syndrome.

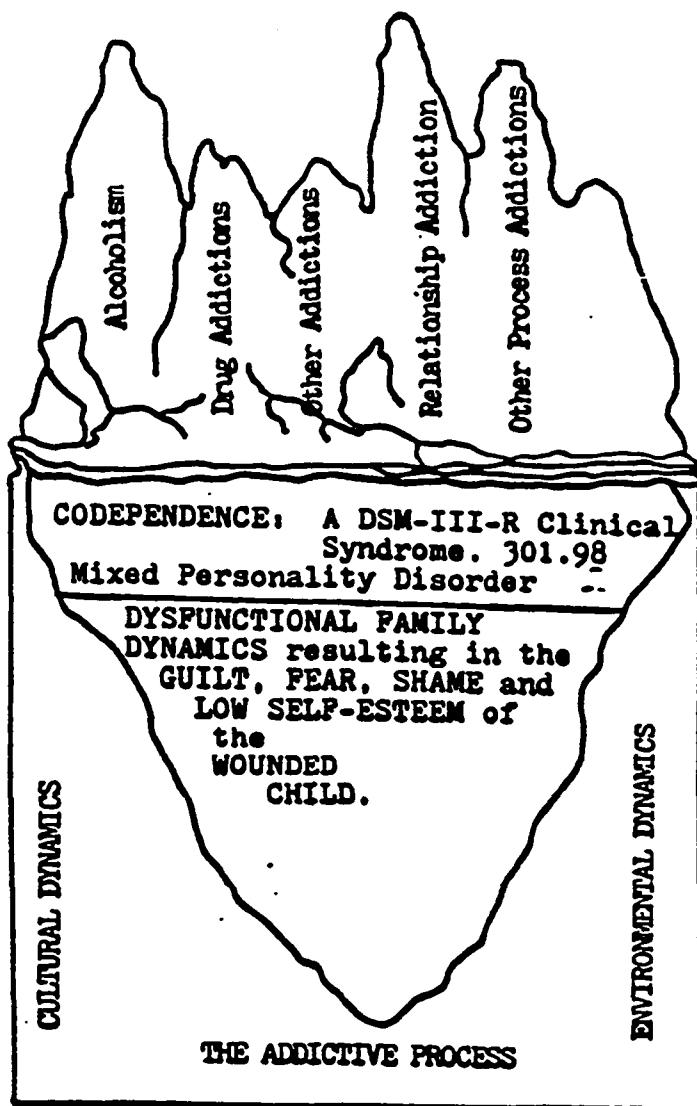
The reason this discussion is important is that addictions have traditionally been defined as primary illnesses, Axis I, while relationship or personality issues

have been put under either adjustment disorders, Axis I, or personality disorders, Axis II. The essential feature of an adjustment disorder is a maladaptive reaction to an identifiable psychosocial stressor. Once again the issue of reacting to an outside stressor is raised. If defined as an adjustment disorder, codependence would be conceptualized as a maladaptive reaction to the behavior of the alcoholic/addict. Thus, once again it becomes little different from enabling as understood from the late 1950s through early 1970s. This also duplicates the traditional understanding of alcoholism/drug addiction as primary and the issues of the enabler/co-alcoholic/codependent as secondary, or reactive.

Thus, within a traditional interpretation of the DSM I am in a catch-twenty two. To follow traditional guidelines I am pressed into recognizing addictive disorders as clinical syndromes, and personality disorders as enduring patterns of maladaptive behavior. This contradicts my understanding of codependence and addiction. However, if I abandon the DSM I am cast adrift in a descriptive and diagnostic nightmare. My proposed direction amidst this morass is to remain within the DSM-III-R diagnostic framework and challenge traditionally accepted diagnostic criteria.

In way of summary, one visual presentation of the relationship between the addictive process, specific addictions and the addictive process is an iceberg. This

illustration is adapted from one created by John Friel and Linda Friel in their book Adult Children: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families.⁹⁰



⁹⁰ Friel and Friel, Adult Children: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families, 160.

The place of the addictive process in this illustration is that it provides a general description of how the iceberg emerges out of the sea in which it floats.

The Disease of Codependence

Much of Chapters 2 and 3 have focused on defining concepts such as disease, addiction, the addictive process and codependence. I have established that the addictive process is a disease from a symptomalogical perspective, and that codependence is one expression of this disease process. I believe that such a vision of the addictive process and codependence is a useful theoretical model and practical tool. I also believe that such a perspective is easily abused, and is being abused.⁹¹ The abuse of codependence focuses around two intertwining issues. First, many popular and clinical definitions of codependence result in the impression that nearly everyone is codependent. Second, the application of the disease concept to codependence appears to be motivated as much by the desire to access insurance money as it is by clinical and theoretical concerns. In short, the abuse of the term codependence focuses on a combination of poor clinical definition and economics.⁹²

⁹¹ For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between the disease concept and addiction see Stanton Peele, Diseasing of America: Addiction Treatment Out of Control (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington, 1989).

⁹² There also appears to be a connection between the abuse of the concept of codependence and the oppression of women. The core of this argument is that the characteristics of codependence are exaggerations of women's prescribed roles in this culture. Since there are statistically more wives of alcoholics than husbands of

At present, the popular and clinical use of the term codependence is so broad it covers a myriad of behavior. I am not arguing that codependence is not a disease as I have defined the term. Rather, I am arguing that codependence as a disease or mental disorder is much less common than its popularity indicates.

When codependence is used to label a broad range of behavior as dysfunctional it becomes abusive. The motivation behind such generalization appears to be economic. The more broadly the term codependence can be drawn, the larger the pool of potential patients. Since codependence as a clinical entity is both poorly defined and popular among the general public it is not surprising that generalization has occurred. Further, since the medical, psychiatric and psychological fields are given considerable power in our culture to define health and disease, there is ample room for generalization.

A second economic issue related to codependence has to do with its definition as a disease or mental disorder. In order to access insurance payment for the treatment of codependence it must be conceptualized as a disease or

alcoholics the term codependent stereotypically refers to women, or to characteristics that are associated with women more than men. Thus, if a woman continues in relationship with an alcoholic man, as her socialization as nurturer leads her to do, she will probably be labeled codependent. From this perspective codependence is an extension, or pathologization, of the culture's definition of stereotypically female role behavior. For a more detailed presentation of this issue see Katherine Van Wormer, "Co-dependency: Implications for Women and Therapy," Women and Therapy 8, no. 4 (1989): 55.

mental disorder. While this scenario is an oversimplification it does point to the economic and political realities of diagnosis and treatment. As a clinical diagnosis codependence can be described as a disease according to the operational definition above. However, I believe that codependence as a disease describes a far smaller portion of the population than its present use indicates.

According to many writers and practitioners in the field, if a person lives or associates with a drug addict or alcoholic, then they are automatically a codependent. If a person derives considerable validity and meaning from a relationship, job, cause, belief or hobby, then they are a codependent. If a person participates in excessive altruistic behavior to the detriment of their own well being, then they are codependent.

While each of these issues reflects an aspect of my operational definition of codependence, the key lies in words such as "considerable" and "excessive." My contention is that these value judgements are being made by "experts" and institutions which have much to gain if "considerable" and "excessive" are understood as loosely as possible.

A further problem is that defining anyone who lives or associates with an addicted person as codependent completely ignores other realities, possibilities and explanations. Here the feminist argument regarding codependence as the pathologization of stereotypically female role behavior

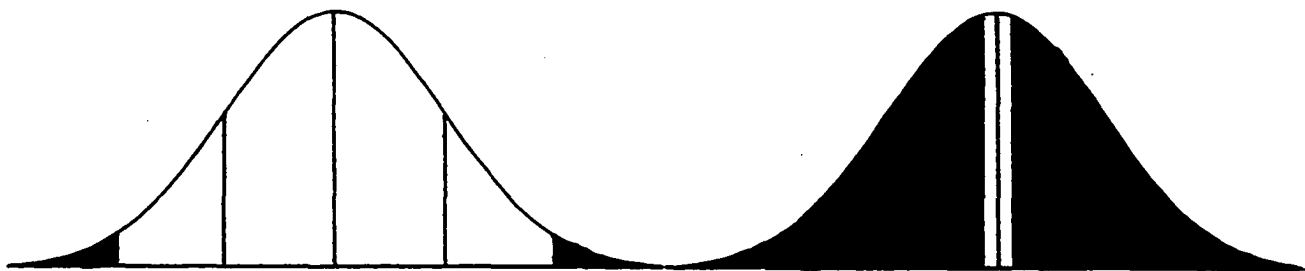
comes into play. While a considerable body of research indicates that the wives of alcoholics show no unusual levels of psychopathology, such research has been overshadowed by the family systems perspective used by many in the field of addiction.

The bell shaped curve is a widely accepted statistical model which describes the diversity and distribution of human behavior. Statistically speaking, normal behavior is considered to be that which falls around the median, or center, of the curve. The median refers to a distribution of behavior, or scores on psychological instruments, above and below which one-half of the frequencies fall. The DSM model uses variations of this statistical approach in combination with a consensus model to determine what is considered a mental disorder.⁹³ To be diagnosed as having a mental disorder a person must function in the extremes of what is considered normal behavior. For example, having a sad or down day does not qualify a person for the diagnosis of major depression. Nor does having a productive, energetic and highly creative day qualify as a manic episode.

With codependence, generally accepted clinical models of codependent behavior encompass far more than the extremes of behavior. The reasons for this appears to be the

⁹³ What normal behavior is and how it is determined is highly debated. I do not necessarily agree with the DSM understanding of normality. Rather, I refer to this model because it is widely accepted and is as close to a standardized schema as is currently available.

tendency to present codependence as a clinical and cultural phenomenon and the economic issues involved in the treatment of addictions. A visual presentation of this broadening of the clinical category is as follows:



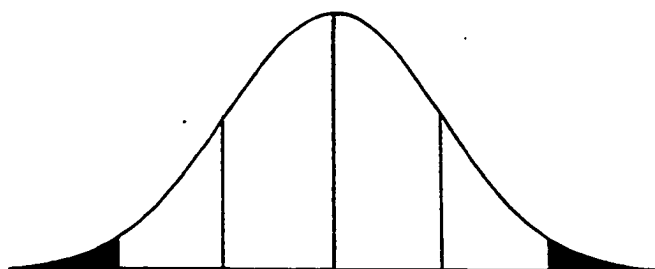
A normal distribution based on the DSM model of mental disorders

A representation of clinical codependence as conceptualized in the field of addictions

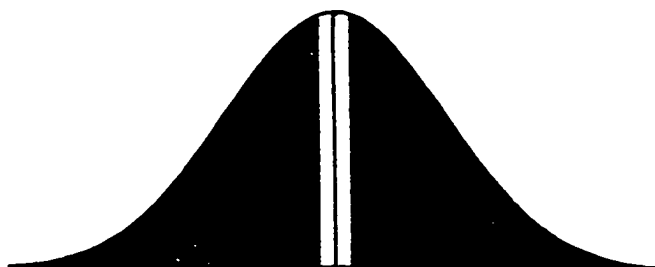
While a mental disorder in the DSM model might occupy only the area above the second standard deviation, codependence is seen as covering nearly the full range of so-called normal behavior. While the above figures are not based on empirical study, they do provide an illustration of the broad ground covered by current definitions of codependence.

Codependence is both an individual disorder and a cultural syndrome. This is reflected in my operational definition of codependence as a DSM-III-R Clinical Syndrome as well as a broadly based cultural process/syndrome/constellation of personality traits. The addictive process can embrace this understanding of codependence and disease in that it is clearly progressive

in nature. Ray Hoskins developmental schema does not refer to the addictive process as involving disease until the fifth and final stage.⁹⁴ However, the addictive process also recognizes that codependent behavior is a widespread reality in our culture at both individual and corporate levels. The following illustrations are based on my understanding of codependence as a clinical disorder and a culturally supported syndrome or constellation of personality traits.



Codependence as a
clinical disorder



Codependence as a
culturally supported
syndrome

There is a difference between persons' exhibiting codependent behavior and their being codependent in a clinical sense. There is also a difference between labeling a culture as addictive and realizing that the addictive process plays a powerful role in the workings of a culture. This is the difference between a syndrome and a disorder or disease.

⁹⁴ Hoskins, 98.

Many, if not most, people at one time or another exhibit behavior which falls within my understanding of codependence. Many people surrender to external sources of value and meaning out of a sense of inner meaninglessness. People can and do sometimes live in denial. The culture does not support the open and genuine expression of feelings. A great deal of compulsive behavior thrives in our culture. Women, and some men, are socialized to nurture and meet other's needs. The culture itself appears to support and reinforce a wide range of addictive/self surrendering/codependent behavior. To ignore the power of codependent behavior and its underlying cultural dynamics is to dance a dance of death. Yet to label everyone who participates in any of these behaviors as codependent, in a clinical sense, has more to do with economics and stereotypical judgment than with transformation.

CHAPTER 4

Dualistic Spirituality, The Addictive Process and
Codependence

Dualism is a way of viewing reality as composed of irreconcilable opposites such as right/wrong, higher/lower, mind/body, redeemed/fallen and male/female.¹ Dualistic approaches to creation have been the norm of human thought such that what should be unities (mind/body, redeemed/fallen, thinking/feeling, spirit/nature, etc.) have been perceived as irreconcilable opposites.

In To Change the World: Christology and Cultural Criticism² and New Woman New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation³ Rosemary Radford Ruether explores the body/soul and subject/object dualisms as critical to understanding both theological and cultural oppression, and how they are intertwined. She identifies Western epistemology and spirituality as modeled on a gnostic body-hating and self-alienating view of reality based on a body/soul dualism. Salvation from this perspective comes

¹ F.L. Cross, "Dualism," The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. F.L. Cross, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 428.

² Rosemary Radford Ruether, To Change the World: Christology and Cultural Criticism (New York: Crossroad, 1983).

³ Rosemary Radford Ruether, New Woman New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation (Minneapolis: Winston, 1975).

from the repression of the body (all sensual appetites and feelings) and a flight to an inward, transcendent spiritual self. The result of this approach to creation is a death ethic where eating, sleeping, bathing, the delights of ear and eye and most importantly sexual pleasure are all the veritable seat of the devil. Salvation is achieved by life-long mortification culminating in death and separation of the soul from the body. While Christianity has done much to separate itself from this understanding of creation as utterly fallen it has succeeded only in subtly supporting such a world view.

The ideological roots of such an oppressive, body-denying world view are found in Western culture's appropriation of a dualistic perspective from the ancient world.⁴ Ruether traces the course of this appropriation by Western culture and the Christian religion in New Woman New Earth. She sees the transition from nomadic hunting/gathering bands to villages to urban life as precipitating a shift in roles between women and men.⁵ The dualism between male and female which resulted from this shift is the ideological foundation for viewing creation in dualistic categories.

What was essentially an egalitarian relationship between men and women on the tribal level was increasingly

⁴ Carol Christ, "The New Feminist Theology: A Review of the Literature," Religious Studies Review 3, no. 4 (1977), 206.

⁵ Ruether, New Woman New Earth, 6-19.

dominated by an inherited monopoly of male political power as culture shifted to village based social units.⁶ As this shift became increasingly part of the political landscape ideologies were created to justify it. Since such ideological pictures of female inferiority contradicted women's sense of self, they were reinforced by misogyny.⁷ This treatment of women was also incorporated into the male dominated ideology in ways which justified the brutality.

The resulting inequalities in social, political and economic power were amplified by increasing urbanization and the centralization of the means of production. As economic productivity and political power shifted from village or family units to centralized locations, women were increasingly isolated both from the means of production and the education necessary for entrance into the halls of power. Consequently, women's social, political and economic roles became tied to home and family which were viewed by dominant male ideologies as having less value.

As power was increasingly defined in economic and political terms a male priestly class began to develop. This priestly class integrated male ideological attitudes about the relationship between men and women into spiritual realms. Men were increasingly cast as occupying a higher, spiritual role while women were relegated to a lesser, physical role. Women became inferior not only in terms of

⁶ Ruether, New Woman New Earth, 7.

⁷ Ruether, New Woman New Earth, 8.

economic and political power but in the ultimate scheme of things, ontology. What began in the dawning of human consciousness as an awareness of the difference between female and male, and the probable celebration of the mother, evolved into a male dominated dualism based on political and economic power. This male/female dualism was then translated from economic to theological language via the close relationship between economic and religious ideology.⁸

How Christianity came to incorporate this complex dance of dualism centers on the cultural matrix in which it developed. The world in which Christianity was born was dominated by the Hebrew Bible and talmudic Judaism and the dualistic spirituality of Hellenism.⁹ While quite different in content, both traditions embraced the social, political, economic and religious ideology described above.

The Jewish tradition expressed its misogyny in language drawn from the patriarchal family, whereas the Greek tradition came to symbolize it

⁸ Rosemary Radford Ruether's understanding of the close relationship between economic and religious ideology comes from her Marxist epistemology. A subjective idealist epistemology, born out of an Enlightenment understanding of knowledge, focuses on the belief that ideas shape reality. According to Marxist epistemology the purpose of knowledge is not to understand the world but to change it. Consequently, the world is not changed by ideas. Ideas are changed by praxis. Marxism seeks to interpret the power of praxis. Part of this analysis is the realization that all institutions serve and stabilize the ruling class. Two of the most significant institutions which serve the powerful are religion and economics. While they appear as separate entities, Marxist analysis identifies them as closely tied and working in sync to keep in place the structures of oppression. Many Latin American liberation theologians use this methodology of analysis.

⁹ Ruether, New Woman New Earth, 16.

in abstract philosophical language. But these two forms of patriarchal hierarchicalism were parallel and began to amalgamate in the Hellenistic period. . . Christianity fell heir to the fusion.¹⁰

The spirituality embedded in both world views centered on an asceticism in which the body was viewed as lowly and corrupt. The Greek version of this body/soul dualism approached the matter philosophically. The soul, or reason, was believed to pre-exist the body, and to be the true self. This true self was believed to have originated in a transcendent world, and fallen to a lower realm of existence. Salvation became freeing the soul from its confinement in physical, emotional existence.¹¹ The body was viewed as a crude vessel which contained and transported the true self, soul, while in this world. The body could be trained and honed to its greatest potential, but this served only to provide more satisfactory temporary quarters for the soul. The ascetic spirituality of Greek culture was one centered on the primacy of reason, or the true self. Embedded in this philosophical asceticism was a vision of women as not only identified with the body, but as being secondary creatures.¹² Women were identified as Pandora, tempting men from the higher world of reason into the bodily realm, and thus into a world of trouble.

¹⁰ Ruether, New Woman New Earth, 15.

¹¹ Ruether, New Woman New Earth, 16.

¹² Ruether, New Woman New Earth, 15.

The Jewish version of this dualistic world view focused on the family.¹³ The original family was Adam and Eve. The family history of Adam and Eve has Eve as the temptress who is responsible for the downfall of Adam, and their eventual expulsion from the Garden. This prototypical story is a cornerstone of the Hebrew religious ideology which identifies women as the source of sin. While the tradition of women as the source of sin is not as strong in Hebrew religious ideology as in Christianity, it is present: "From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die."¹⁴ Present also are a variety of traditions which view men and women in a far more equal manner. One example of this tradition is the equality of men and women in parts of Levitical law. According to the more sexist tradition, women were bodily temptresses who must be controlled and subjugated if they were not to threaten the spiritual quest. Embedded in this religious ideology is an ascetic spirituality which denies the body, seeing it as a qualitatively different substance than spirit.

Gnosticism served only to amplify and deepen the body/soul, male/female dualisms inherent in Greek and Hebrew

¹³ For a more detailed discussion of dualism and sexism in Jewish history and theology see T. Drorah Setel, "Roundtable Discussion: Feminist Reflections on Separation and Unity in Jewish Theology," Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion 2, no. 1 (1986): 113-18.

¹⁴ Ecclesiasticus 25:24. All references are to Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha: Revised Standard Version (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

cultures. As such, it was effectively an amalgamation of themes inherent in the dominant socio-religious traditions of the day. In gnostic cosmology the world was created by the Demiurge, or creator god, and not by God, who was unknowable and remote. The Demiurge was, in modern terms, a fallen lesser god or angel. Consequently the world is radically fallen and antagonistic to all that is truly spiritual. Gnosis was a spark of Divine spiritual substance present in some men. Jesus was the emissary of the Divine God who brought gnosis into the world. The function of gnosis was to free men from the evil of this material world toward union with the truly Divine God.

While the cosmology and anthropology of Gnosticism differed considerably in content from Greek and Hebrew traditions, its dualistic asceticism mirrored theirs. The physical world was an evil place, antagonistic to the true, spiritual self. The body was evil, or at least a major impediment to spiritual life, and the spirit/soul/reason was best embraced through an ascetic spirituality. Women were identified with the body, while men were seen as closer to the realm of spirit. Salvation was attained only through special knowledge which involved separating self from body/world.

This was the religious/philosophical landscape into which Jesus was born. In her book Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics, Beverly Wildung Harrison paints a picture of the ministry of Jesus as radically

opposed to the culture of his day.¹⁵ Instead of supporting the dominant religion of his day, which focused on making people religious in socially accepted ways, Jesus encouraged people to live as if the Kingdom of God were present. Jesus' conception of religion called for people to live in the Way as a means of participating in the Kingdom of God.¹⁶ The Way involved a radical lifestyle centered around love, care for one another and an approach to life focused on living in the Way. Strict adherence to the rules of the dominant religion/culture as a means to salvation was replaced by a deeper call to faithfulness. Preaching such a Way ultimately brought Jesus into conflict with the powers and principalities of his day.

Jesus was not crucified for urging that we sacrifice ourselves for God. He was killed because he insisted on encouraging the acting out of the conditions of God's reign and on getting "the Way" of radical communitarian living under way.¹⁷

Following Jesus' death, the people of the Way sought to live out his vision of what it meant to live in the Kingdom of God. However, faced with mounting social and political pressure that they were undermining the public good, fear set in. Slowly the people of the Way became the people of Jesus.

¹⁵ Beverly Wildung Harrison, Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics (Boston: Beacon, 1985), 216-19.

¹⁶ Harrison, 217.

¹⁷ Harrison, 218.

The early Christians came less and less to talk about staying "on the Way" in terms of God's reign and began, more and more, to substitute beliefs about Jesus' extraordinary power, clinging to his memory in the past rather than living toward the future in the pattern of relations they had embraced and affirmed with him. . . .With this shift from praxis to ideology, those "on the Way" became religious in the way religious people are popularly expected to behave, that is, acting holier than others and finding their distinctiveness in certain beliefs and propositions that assure blessedness.¹⁸

The power of the dominant dualistic ideologies reasserted itself. Christianity slowly evolved from a radical way of living and being in the world focused on the Way to an amalgamation of the words and acts of Jesus, an ascetic spirituality and a syncretism of Christian theology and current ideologies.

Matthew Fox shares a similar vision. According to Fox, Christianity lost its genuine spiritual foundation through two interacting forces: (1) an intermingling of the Christian faith with the dominant political powers of the day; and (2) the embracing of nonbiblical philosophies such as gnosticism, stoicism and Platonism.¹⁹ With regard to the embracing of political power, Fox sees Constantine's embracing of the Christian faith as a crucial event in Christian history. It was here that Christianity became intimately involved in the dance between faith and Empire.

¹⁸ Harrison, 218.

¹⁹ Matthew Fox, ed., "Introduction: Roots and Routes in Western Spiritual Consciousness," Western Spirituality: Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes (Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1981), 1.

Put another way, when Constantine embraced Christianity, Christianity's stake in world politics increased dramatically. One outcome of this growing alliance between faith and Empire was that creation centered spirituality, or the Way, was subverted and reinterpreted in order to adapt to changing political realities. As Christianity became increasingly identified with dominant political powers it became increasingly necessary to make peace with dominant ideologies. The result was a fusion of political and philosophical ideologies with the Christian faith. Creation spirituality was seen as incompatible with political and ideological realities and was suppressed. As faith and Empire continued to jockey for power and authority each realized that their fates were joined. This process ultimately led to the development of the Holy Roman Empire.

Fox sees Augustinian theology as a critical expression of the fusion of Christian theology and cultural ideologies. Augustine's influence on Western Christianity was tremendous. Leo Scheffczyk argues that except for Jesus, Paul and the prophets, Augustine's influence on Christian theology was unmatched.²⁰ Fox believes Augustine translated the world denying spirituality embedded in Gnosticism and Platonism into Christian theological language. The result of this transformation was fall/redemption theology. This was a violation of the ancient creation centered spiritual tradition which Fox sees

²⁰ Fox, Original Blessing, 103, 121.

as beginning with the Yahwist or J source in the ninth century BC.²¹ While not always a dominant force, Fox sees the creation tradition present in the prophets, the wisdom literature and in the life and teaching of Jesus.

It is not my intention to argue that Augustine's theology has no value. What I am pointing to is that Augustine's Platonism emphasized certain biblical and spiritual understandings of the relationship between God, creation and human beings at the expense of others. Augustine's dualistic hierarchy and world denying spirituality effectively ignored ancient traditions, explored in Chapter 5, which affirmed the unity and goodness of God, creation and humanity.

With Augustine the concept of creation as radically fallen entered Christian theology. One implication of this perspective on creation and humanity was that the believer must not seek God in the natural world. Since creation was fallen, God must be sought in the inner workings of the human soul or spirit. This shift away from creation toward introspection shifted theological concern away from God's saving acts in history toward God's actions in the innermost reaches of the human soul. The next logical step in this theological journey was the belief that the best way to meet God was to retire from fallen creation to an inner world. Thus, detachment from creation and body became crucial to the search for salvation.

²¹ Fox, Original Blessing, 44-47.

The difficulty with Augustinian theology is not that he fails to provide a coherent notion of sin and salvation, but that his approach is exclusivistic and world denying. Augustine's vision, and that of theology for centuries to come, focused on salvation as an individualistic, inner directed process which denied the importance of salvation history. Augustine's lack of concern for salvation history resulted in lack of concern for the redemption or transformation of creation.

One argument against this perspective on Augustinian theology was his apparent concern for Christian action presented in The City of God.²² While The City of God does address the issue of Christian action in the world, its focus is far less on the transformation or salvation of the world than with how Christian's can live in the world without being contaminated by it. Augustine's vision of Christian action focused on how God could keep the soul of the believer safe even while living in this fallen world.²³ Augustine's implicit focus is far more on God's power to keep the individual soul secure amidst the dangerous waters of the world than it is on Christian action toward the transformation of the world. Even Augustine's vision of Christian action reinforces his belief in the radical

²² This idea and the summary of Augustinian theology which follows relies heavily on ideas presented in Joseph R. Pickett, God and World-Loyalty: Prayer From a Process Perspective. Ph.D. Diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1986, p. 70-72

²³ Pickett, 70-71.

fallenness of the world, and the importance of an individualistic and inner directed salvation.

One of the theological hallmarks of Augustinian theology is the belief that salvation can only be obtained through communion with an "eternal other."²⁴ This belief combined with his emphasis on salvation through introspective retreat from a radically fallen world leads to an otherworldly spirituality which denies creation. The parallels between this cosmology and anthropology and those of Gnosticism and Platonism are obvious.

To summarize, Jesus' concern for praxis in light of living in the Kingdom of God and the creation spirituality this belief expressed were transformed by two great forces. The first was the marriage between Christianity and the political and ideological powers of the day. The second was the introduction of a world and body denying, transcendent spirituality. A central demand of both these influences was a faith/spirituality focused not on how to transform living, but on how to achieve salvation in order to gain entrance into the next, higher, world. This dualistic spirituality, mirroring Greek, Hellenistic and Gnostic influences, fueled the shift from praxis to ideology, embodied to transcendent spirituality. Built on an ancient dualistic foundation these forces shaped the childhood of the Christian religion.

The history of how this shift came to be fully integrated into Christian theology and spirituality is long

²⁴ Pickett, 71.

and complex, and is not a direct concern of this study. It is sufficient to say that the dance between embodied and transcendent spiritual and theological traditions has been dominated by Western European theology's dualistic ontology. This is not to say that creation centered spiritual traditions have been absent from Christian history. These traditions have continued, but have, in large part, been dominated by the dualistic ontology of Western European theology.

It is important to avoid making the discussion between dualistic ontologies and non-dualistic ontologies into one more either/or construct. It is tempting to create such a construct because our cultural thinking processes, ways of viewing creation, are oriented to viewing problems this way. However, to identify the Way too closely with creation spiritualities and dualistic ontology with the forces of darkness/dualism/oppression is to create a vicious circle. It is my contention that creation centered spiritualities do embody the Way, as referred to by Beverly Wildung Harrison, far better than dualistic ontologies and the transcendent spiritualities they support. However, it is not my goal to set up an either/or scenario. Rather, I want to create a dialogue which will hopefully name the violence I see inherent in transcendent spiritualities and make creation spiritualities more accessible.

In order to do this it is crucial to recognize and embrace the gifts of fall/redemption traditions. In order

to do this, it is crucial to remember that these are not two clearly defined traditions. It is not possible to identify this or that tradition or practice as exclusively Creation or fall/redemption oriented. This said, it is this author's belief that fall/redemption traditions offer two powerful insights into the God/human relationship that need to be acknowledged. The first of these is that fall/redemption traditions clearly recognize and name sin in the world. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, a vulnerability of Matthew Fox's understanding of creation spirituality is that in embracing our original blessing it becomes more difficult to acknowledge the depth of our sin. In contrast to this, fall/redemption traditions focus on our sinfulness, and do not hesitate to acknowledge the depth of our capacity for destructiveness. A deep truth which Augustine offered the human community was his understanding of the depth of human sin, and the brokenness of creation. At some level, a consistent strength of fall/redemption traditions are that they are unhesitatingly honest about their perception of the human condition. We are deeply wounded, and wounding.

The issue at hand is one of balance. Fall/redemption traditions face and focus on the reality of human sinfulness. In response to this awareness of sin, fall/redemption theologies and spirituality offer God's love in infinite abundance. This is the second deep insight which fall/redemption traditions offer. Just as fall/redemption traditions acknowledge the utter depth of

human fallenness, these traditions offer, in equal abundance, the gift of God's love, grace and forgiveness.

Historically, fall/redemption traditions have danced with how to balance the depth of human fallenness with the depth of God's love and the means of grace.

This author does not argue with the insights which fall/redemption traditions embrace and name. Fall/redemption traditions offer deep insight both in their proclamation of the depth of human sin and the lengths to which God goes to heal and love. It is this author's contention that the context in which this dance of woundedness and healing is set is wounding in itself. Fall/redemption traditions identify fundamental truths about God and creation. There is sin in the world. God's grace is abundant. These are deep truths. It is the hierarchical ontology in which this dance of sin and salvation is set that is the subject of this work. Such a vision of the God/human relationship results in a destructive focus on sin and an understanding of God's love as largely external to creation itself. Just as fall/redemption traditions have the potential to balance creation traditions' radical optimism, discussed in Chapter 5, so creation tradition have the potential to balance fall/redemption traditions intense focus on sin and understanding of God's love as somehow residing largely outside of creation.

In recent years it appears that anti-material approaches to creation should have lessened due to the

evolution of the modern empirical, scientific point of view. In particular, theories of relativity and quantum mechanics point to the interconnectivity of all things via an awareness that energy and matter are not separate substances/processes. Through the study of the body and the world around as natural and acceptable phenomenon in an interconnected universe it would appear that Christianity's subtle belief that the body/creation is somehow evil should be corrected.

This has not occurred in that the science has incorporated its own dualistic approach to creation by separating subject and object. The scientific approach which dominates our culture splits creation into subject and object. This dualistic world view categorizes the subject as separate from the object so that the object may be studied at a distance.

The subject/object dualism is the basis of modern science. Although Renaissance thinking has challenged one aspect of classical Christian spirituality, the body/soul dualism, modern science has preserved an analogous bias through a dualistic perception of outward reality as dead matter. Though relativity theory and quantum mechanics directly contradict this dualism, our culture is still far from incorporating this physics into our conception of the world. Part of this has to do with our need to believe that we are in control of creation. While dualism provides a

neat and easily definable picture of creation, process visions reflect creation's ever changing nature.

The subject/object dualism is a powerful force in culture. Given the predominance of the scientific method as a means of exploring reality, the subject/object dualism has become as much a part of our world-view as the body/spirit dualism. These two dualisms shape not only our vision of the physical world but of spirituality. God becomes the eternal other²⁵, being itself as opposed to being and doing²⁶ or is accessible only through the Christ of the Bible²⁷. Theology becomes something to be studied and engaged in systematically. Spirituality becomes suspect for its emotionality, and is identified with more charismatic denominations.

When spirituality is integrated into mainline denominations it is done so in a well ordered, controlled manner. The popular Cursillo and Walk To Emmaus spiritual movements in several major Protestant denominations do indicate a concern for spiritual renewal. While providing a balance for the persistent intellectualism of mainline Protestantism, these movements tend to offer a spirituality focused on transcendence, personal piety, otherworldly salvation and a separation of body and spirit.

²⁵ Pickett, 71.

²⁶ Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

²⁷ Karl Barth, The Humanity of God (Richmond, Va.: John Knox, 1960).

This is the spiritual tradition passed down to us through Christian history and reinforced by the new gods of the scientific method.

Dualistic Spirituality, Hierarchy and Oppression

Dualistic perceptions of reality alienate each of us from ourselves and from creation, and serves to reinforce the body/soul dualism instead of overthrowing it. These two dualisms are woven into the very fabric of Western culture and Christian faith. Such an understanding of the world where body and soul, subject and object are separated supports the creation of both the ecological destruction of creation and the oppression of people. These are possible because living out of a body/soul, subject/object dualistic view of the world allows for the earth, certain groups of people and the body to be viewed as Other. Dualistic approaches to creation are the source and life giving energy of oppression because they encourage the denigration of the Other.

In fusing ontology and dualism Western European theology and culture have created a vision of creation based on a hierarchy ordained by God. Creation is viewed in either/or terms where one of the poles of the dualism is viewed as being naturally higher, better or more valuable than the inferior pole. Western European theology has historically reinforced this dualistic, hierarchical picture of reality by seeing it as ordained and defended by God. Thus, elements of dualisms which are perceived as higher are

superior because they are closer to God. Such is the case with the body/spirit dualism. The spirit is seen as closer in substance and nature to God, and is perceived as more valuable than the body. The results of this dualistic split are staggering. Since the spirit, or soul, is more valuable than the body, the earth is estranged from the spirit, evangelism is nothing more than theological conversion and spirituality need not bother with creation.

A key result of this vision of creation is that dominant-submissive relationships have become normative. The implicit order of creation as envisioned in Western European theology and culture is as follows:

GOD
ANGELS
Men
women
children
animals
plants
earth.

Of course reality is far more complex than this simple hierarchy suggests. Within each category there are sub-hierarchies. White males are closer to God than Black or Chinese males. Women who are feminine are more valuable than women who are not. Male children are more important than female children. Animals that directly serve men are more important than animals that do not. And so forth.

A key result of this dualistic ontological hierarchy is that there is little or no possibility for cooperation or mutuality between the allegedly higher and lower parties. Further, since this understanding of creation is based on power there is constant struggle within niches for more power. Such a vision of creation severely limits the possibility of cooperation and mutuality between and within categories. Everyone is the Other to some degree simply because they are not ME. THEY become potential tools in my struggle to rise higher on the ladder of power and meaning, and thus, according to ontological hierarchy, closer to God.

Oppression is built into this vision of creation. Yet the inherent oppression is far more complex and thorough than at first glance. Built into this vision of creation ordained by God and expressed in organized religion and spirituality is oppression of both poles of a dualism. Body and Spirit are oppressed. Women and Men are oppressed. God and Creation are oppressed.

Oppression may be defined as an "unjust or cruel exercise of power . . . a sense of heaviness or obstruction in the body or mind."²⁸ Oppression is an approach to life which denies fullness of life to those perceived as lower parties in a hierarchy, and everyone is a lower party to someone. Given the vertical structure of such a vision of creation, oppression of all parties is inherent.

²⁸ "Oppression," Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary.

Not even God escapes. Oppression is not only an unjust and cruel exercise of power against the oppressed; it also inflicts a heaviness or obstruction on the oppressor. The oppressor is also largely defined by their role. If their place in the hierarchy of creation states they should be powerful, little gentleness or vulnerability is allowed. No matter where one stands on the ladder of ontological power, the consequences of living in such a structure of creation is oppression. All are blocked from fullness of life. To be the oppressed or the oppressor is to be forced into a limited way of being. To oppress or to be oppressed is to be manipulated into preconceived ways of being which define who you can and cannot be within the oppressor/oppressed relationship. Both result in ways of living which block fullness of life.

Such a vision of creation denies the body, sees spirituality as detached and otherworldly, fosters competition instead of cooperation and denies the interconnectedness of all life. Most importantly for the present discussion, such a vision of creation sees meaning and value as dwelling outside the person. Salvation is individualistic, granted from on high and takes place on a transcendent, spiritual plane. Personal power has to do with position on the ladder. Personal meaning is defined by production or position. Doing is more important than being.

While the above picture of fall/redemption theology and spirituality emphasize its destructive content, this theology should not be made into a whipping post. To do so would be to participate in the same dualistic world view as fall/redemption theology. Great good and beauty have come from the church as organization and as a gathered community of people. The church has sought to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with its God. It has sought to fight oppression and seek liberation. It has recognized the violation of the earth as a moral and spiritual issue. It has sought economic justice. It has sought to embody its spirituality in more lively and grounded ways. In recent times, theologians have increasingly sought to integrate love of creation and issues of justice and oppression into mainstream theology. Further, such issues are not limited to academic theology, but are increasingly issues of great concern in the local church. It may even be that it is the experience of people at the grass roots level which has called the theological discipline to address the relationship between liberation and salvation. However this conversation has come about, the result is that what may be termed fall/redemption traditions are increasingly addressing the goodness of creation and the Biblical call for liberation. Still, these themes continue to be largely overshadowed and shaped by the concern for individual sin and transcendent salvation. It is here that creation traditions offer a needed balance.

As long as creation is understood as fallen and persons as inherently sinful, issues of ecology, justice, oppression and liberation must take a back seat to personal salvation. As long as subtle forms of works righteousness shape the quest for justice, justice will be a by-product of the quest for salvation. Given this scenario, the quest for ecological, economic and political justice and belief in the goodness of persons and creation is much like landscaping around a sanctuary. While everyone admires it, the sanctuary is the center of attention.

Dualistic Spirituality and the Addictive Process

Within the above vision of creation is embedded a profound sense of powerlessness and meaninglessness in that everyone is oppressed. Everyone and everything is fallen. It is simply a matter of how far. Though addiction is a complex concept, at a metaphorical level it is an attempt to find meaning and value. I believe addiction springs out of a search for meaning. As such it is a deeply spiritual issue. I also believe addiction is intertwined with the inherently life denying spirituality of fall/redemption theology. The addicts search for meaning mirrors the way meaning is sought after in fall/redemption theology.

In fall/redemption theology we are lifeless and powerless without God above, must surrender ourselves to His will and give up our ways in order to dwell in His goodness. Redemption--salvation from our fallenness--means surrendering to God our Father in heaven, following His redeeming ways

and no longer walking in the ways of fallen creation. In addiction persons believe they are fundamentally bad, unlovable as they are, unable to meet their own needs, and they live as if their needs can only be met through external sources. Out of this sense of powerlessness and meaninglessness addicts surrender themselves to that which provides a sense of meaning and power. It becomes their god.

The addictive process can be defined as

a generalized coping style in which a person learns to habitually respond to reality by using fix-oriented behaviors to bring about desired feelings rather than by responding directly to life's moment to moment demands.²⁹

The person following the path of the addictive process is self-centered and avoids dealing with the immediate realities of living. The person following the path of fall/redemption theology is involved in an egocentric salvation and transcendent spirituality. In both fall/redemption spirituality and addiction:

1. Meaning and value dwell outside the person.
2. The external source of meaning becomes god--the source of life, meaning and value.
3. The external source of meaning, God, is absolute power rather than deep myth, metaphor or poetry.
4. The person approaches life from a perspective of personal fallenness or worthlessness.

²⁹ Hoskins, 98.

5. The quest for salvation or a fix is ego centered, and generally undermines corporate or interpersonal responsibility.

6. The high or salvation frequently disengages the person from the world rather than engaging them with it.

7. Dealing with immediate reality becomes less important than achieving a fix or obtaining salvation

8. Meaning or salvation is achieved through behavior that the environment/culture defines as appropriate.

Fall/redemption theology reinforces these truths. Western European culture reinforces these truths. The culture of addiction reinforces these truths. The very structure of creation, ontological hierarchy, reinforces these truths. Meaning and value must be: (1) layered on, with clothes and makeovers; (2) granted from above, by the grace of God; (3) earned, via good works; or (4) injected, via alcohol and other drugs. The dance of addiction is the dance of dualistic ontological hierarchy and fall/redemption theology.

Fall/redemption spirituality is a broad concept. It does not identify one historical spiritual discipline. Rather, it describes the spiritual/theological beliefs that undergird a wide variety of predominantly Western European spiritual disciplines and practices. Fall/redemption spirituality is part of the fabric of fall/redemption

theology. As such, fall/redemption spirituality approaches creation through the same dualistic ontological hierarchy.

As described by Matthew Fox, the fundamental elements of fall/redemption spirituality are:

1. A primary concern with personal perfection or holiness.
2. An emphasis on the original sin of the human being and the radical fallenness of creation.
3. An egocentric introspection.
4. A belief that miracles are outside interventions which contravene the laws of nature.
5. An emphasis on privatistic spirituality.
6. A dualistic vision of God and creation.
7. A belief in the mortification of the body in order to cleanse the soul.
8. An elitism born of the belief that Jesus is the only, or at least best, way to salvation.
9. A narrow belief in the person of Jesus rather than in the Cosmic Christ.
10. A narrow belief in Jesus as Son of God instead of prophet, story-teller, artist, and Son of God.
11. An identification of the Kingdom of God with the church instead of with the whole of creation.
12. An emphasis on purity with regard to the world rather than embracing the world.

13. An emphasis on personal salvation instead of the healing and wholeness of the people of God and the whole world.³⁰

Two central themes that are embedded in both fall/redemption spirituality and the addictive process will be explored here in detail; they are ego-centrism and low self-esteem.

Ego-centrism: A consistent theme in this summary is that the goal of fall/redemption spirituality is purification of the soul from original sin and sin inherent in contact with fallen creation. In order to do this the person must withdraw into themselves, avoid fallen creation and focus on their sin. What results is a strangely paradoxical ego-centeredness. Ascetic practices such as fasting, withdrawal from the larger culture and refraining from speech focus increased attention on the person while at the same celebrating denial of self. The person turns away from the world, plumbs their depths and at the same time denies their self. While the overt goal is shedding the personal self for the imago dei or God-self within a covert result is a subtle ego-centeredness.

Implicit in fall/redemption spirituality is a belief that all of creation is built around humanity. Originally we were not so much a part of creation as somehow a separate creation set down in the midst of the larger creation. We and all of creation were good until we ate the apple and

³⁰ This list is a summary of ideas found in Fox, Original Blessing, 316-19; and Pickett, 65-66.

chose to rebel against God. In that act not only we became sinful but creation as well. Creation is not what it is in and of itself. It is fallen in relation to us.

Such a perspective sees everything in terms of human life/characteristics/attributes. All of creation is viewed in terms of human sin and salvation. Creation cannot be celebrated for its being. It must constantly be evaluated as either good or bad according to our rules, our perceptions of reality. We are not so much an integral part of creation as either its victims or conquerors.

This subtle but profound ego-centeredness results in a lack of concern for true healing of self, the human family, the environment and the church. Further, this ego-centeredness demands sin be seen in terms of the individual. Consequently there is little concern for corporate sin or justice. Healing and wholeness become individual, personal concerns. The culture and the planet are largely lost in the wake of personal salvation/healing, or viewed as secondary concerns.

Low self-esteem: Embedded in fall\redemption spirituality is a belief that humanity is fallen and valueless without the intervention of an external, redeeming God. Humanity, and creation itself, is of little inherent value. This hierarchical structure of valuelessness and Ultimate Value is reflected in Christian worship. The basic structure of Protestant worship includes a General Confession which is followed by a Prayer for Pardon or Words

of Assurance.³¹ Personal valuelessness, meaninglessness and low-self-esteem are embedded in the General Confession. One example of a General Confession is printed under the heading "The Order of Worship" in The Book of Worship for Church and Home:

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.³²

One Prayer for Pardon taken from the same source is:

May almighty God, who caused light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, cleansing us from all our sins, and restoring us to the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.³³

We are lost sheep who have strayed from the Shepherd. We have followed the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have broken God's laws. We have not done what we should have done, and done other things which we should not have done. Only God in heaven can shine light into our darkness, cleanse us from our sins and restore us to the knowledge of his glory in Christ. Our place in the ontological hierarchy of creation consigns us to darkness and internal emptiness/rebellion.

³¹ United Methodist Church, The Book of Worship for Church and Home (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1965), 4-5.

³² United Methodist Church, 4-5.

³³ United Methodist Church, 177.

In way of summary, we are worthless without our Father God in heaven yet at the same time live as if creation itself revolved around us. This paradoxical self-centeredness and worthlessness are at the core of fall/redemption spirituality. The two are inextricably intertwined. They reflect almost perfectly Augustine's ancient vision of the radical fallenness of creation and egocentric, introverted path to salvation.

The issues of ego-centeredness and low self-esteem are important to the present discussion because these are core beliefs underlying addiction. The addict is radically ego-centered and at the same time lives out of a core of low self-esteem. The addict operates out of four core beliefs:

1. Low self-image: I am fundamentally a bad person who is unworthy of love and life.
 2. Inherent lack of worth: No one could possibly love me as I am.
 3. An inability to meet one's own needs: I am incapable of meeting my own needs.
 4. A search for external solutions and meaning: My needs can only be met through external sources.³⁴
- Inherent in the above core beliefs is a paradox. While the addict lives out of a core of low self-esteem their behavior and world view is often grandiose and self-aggrandizing.

³⁴ This list is a synthesis of ideas found in Friel and Friel, Adult Children; Carnes, 120; and Schaef, Co-Dependence, 41-65.

Further, the addict is profoundly self-centered. Addicts see creation as if it revolved around them.

The parallel with fall/redemption spirituality is striking. Both believe in the fallenness/worthlessness of self yet at the same time focus on the self and live as if creation itself focused on them. The work-a-holic uses work to fill an inner emptiness, and at the same time focus great attention on themselves. The person following the path of fall/redemption spirituality follows a variety of paths which lead away from self (prayer, meditation, fasting, refraining from a variety of behavior), yet paradoxically the person lives with a heightened awareness of self. The denial of self inherent in fall/redemption spirituality actually results in a paradoxical awareness of self. When one is hungry, thirsty, denied a life in the larger culture, or forbidden to do or say or think certain things, the immediate result is to focus both on those things and self.³⁵ Addicts do the same. In the same moment that they run from self through the compulsive use of some substance or process, they inevitably focus on self and amplify their pain. In the very act of attempting to leave self, one actually focuses more on self. In both addiction and fall/redemption spirituality, one lives with a deep ego-

³⁵ The long range effect of such self-denial may be an increased awareness of the spiritual dimension of life and a lowered awareness of self. However, implicit in this setup is the belief that it is good to separate from the world and desirable to lose self.

centeredness mixed inseparably with a profound sense of worthlessness.

Addicts operate out of a profound ego-centeredness. The ego-centrism of the addict is reflected in their distorted thinking processes, sense of control, rigidity and, subtle belief that creation focuses on them. The alcoholic/addict believes they can control/manipulate creation. Conversely, the codependent believes they are responsible for creation. Both operate out of distorted thinking processes focusing on control/responsibility issues. The issue at hand is that the addict believes that creation itself operates according to their set of rules. Again, the parallel with fall/redemption spirituality is striking.

To summarize, in both the addictive process and fall/redemption spirituality low self-esteem and ego-centeredness are intertwined. Both operate out of core beliefs in the worthlessness/fallenness of the self, the inability of the person to fill their own deep needs, the need for external meaning/value/salvation and a paradoxical vision that creation focuses on them/operates according to their rules. Both are generally unconcerned with issues of corporate sin, economic or political justice, oppression, liberation or the interconnectivity of humanity and creation. When they do concern themselves with such issues their interest is shaped largely according to how they fit into their needs or vision of creation. In fall/redemption

spirituality these issues are either overshadowed by or embedded in the quest for personal salvation. In the addictive process the person often uses such causes to prove their worth or confirm their sense of power.

This author does not believe the world is as utterly bleak as could be read into this discussion. Perspective is important. The world is not ruled as thoroughly by either fall/redemption spirituality or the addictive process as could be inferred from my presentation. This writer does not wish to participate in the same universalism that Anne Wilson Schaef and other writers in the field of addiction do. Nor do this author believe that fall/redemption spirituality has dominated as thoroughly as might be drawn from my arguments. Rather, this author believes that addiction and fall/redemption spirituality are intertwined, the addictive process is supported by the cultural/theological heritage named above and this world view has had a profound impact on Western civilization. While this impact has been largely destructive to life and spirit to stereotype it as absolutely so is irresponsible and in conflict with the historical record.

This author does not believe, as does Schaef, that the destruction wrought by the addictive process is as pervasive as the air we breathe. Neither do this author believe that the influence of fall/redemption theology has been as thoroughly negative as Matthew Fox appears to believe. Rather, this author believes, as previously mentioned, that

the attempt to seek meaning outside of ourselves is more like the pollution we have set loose on the earth. Every part of creation is affected, but not every part is profoundly contaminated. Further, the pollution we experience is the result of technologies which have the potential both to destroy and to heal.

Abraham Maslow found many individuals who fit or drew close to his vision of self-actualization.³⁶ In a similar vein, Matthew Fox identifies individuals throughout the history of Christianity who have lived out of a creation centered spirituality.³⁷ Most of us have known people whose God dwelt deep within and around them. Their presence and way of living brought a gentle breath of grace, fresh air and joy into our lives. Each of these, this author believes, argues against the near absolute fallenness which could be drawn from Schaefer or Fox.

One further perspective which bears noting is existentialism. It could be argued that the issue underlying fall/redemption theology and the addictive process is existential in nature. Are both these phenomenon expressive of our escape from freedom? Quite probably. The language this author uses to deal with this issue is that of addiction and spirituality. The language of existentialism could be used equally well. That the questions and issues

³⁶ Abraham Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature (New York, Viking, 1971).

³⁷ Fox, Original Blessing, 307-15.

have to do with existentialism and freedom appears obvious. However, to pursue this line of thought, or speak to the issue in this language, is beyond the scope of this study.

Dualistic Spirituality and Codependence

Thus far I have focused on the general area of dualistic spirituality and the addictive process, or addiction. In light of this discussion, how does codependence relate to fall/redemption spirituality? My understanding of codependence is that it is both a specific addiction to fix-oriented relationships, most often referred to as relationship addiction, and a personality disorder present in all addictive behavior. My operational definition of codependence as a personality disorder is that created by Timmen Cermak.³⁸ For a complete discussion of this definition refer to Chapter 3.

The four central themes of codependence are: control, self-sacrifice, need for external validation, and fear. Since each of these themes has already been discussed I will not go into detail regarding the dynamics involved. One important note here, however, is that each of these dynamics is potentially healthy and life sustaining. Control is not necessarily bad. An element of control, over self and neighbor, is an essential to being in relationship. Whether that relationship is marriage or living in community. Self-sacrifice can point to the archetypal truth that we are all

³⁸ Cermak, Diagnosing and Treating Co-dependence, 1, 11.

one, and what happens to you affects me.³⁹ The need for some external validation can also point to the need for community and the interconnectivity of all things. Finally, fear is a basic survival mechanism. It tells us when we are in danger. Thus, these four are potentially positive forces in our lives.

In codependence, these potentially positive forces become distorted. The sources of distortion are generally dysfunctional family, environmental and cultural influences. In codependence, control is the belief that we are responsible for other persons' behavior, and should control their very lives. Self-sacrifice is giving our lives away as a means of living out our dis-belief in ourselves, and of avoiding responsibility for our own lives. The need for external validation reinforces a profound sense of personal worthlessness, and a consequent search for external meaning and value. Living in fear becomes a way of life.

Implicit in this way of being is a remarkable intertwining of ego-centrism and low self-esteem. Codependents believe:

1. They are responsible for another person or persons, or perhaps for life itself.
2. They not only should, but they can control others.
3. Their role in life is to sacrifice their happiness for the joy of another.

³⁹ Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers, "Sacrifice and Bliss," The Power of Myth, ed. Betty Sue Flowers (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 91-121.

4. In sometimes subtle, sometimes blatant ways, they believe the world spins around them. Yet undergirding these seemingly powerful, control oriented behavior are:

1. A deep sense of personal worthlessness.
2. A profound need to seek personal identity, value and meaning through another person or service oriented, sacrificial lifestyle.
3. An implicit and all encompassing ego-centrism.

The power of the codependent springs not from a core of self-love, deep faith and personal meaning but from fear born of battered self-esteem. The codependent lives a paradox. The paradox of ego-centrism and low self-esteem. In trying to escape self the codependent attempts to be responsible for the world around them, and in so doing perceives the world as if everything that occurs somehow relates to them. Is somehow either directed at them or their responsibility. The sins of the world are their fault.

In codependence the person feels worthless without the person, job or behavior they are attached to. Yet, at the same time they live as if they are responsible for creation itself. The codependent believes that everyone is like her/him. Consequently they believe everyone has primal doubts about themselves, and either seeks or should seek to heal themselves through self-sacrifice and service. Both are ultimately self-serving.

The paradox the codependent lives is the paradox of fall/redemption spirituality. The steps may be somewhat different, but the music is the same. In fall/redemption spirituality humanity is worthless without our Father God in heaven yet at the same time we live as if creation itself revolved around us. We and all of creation are fallen. In order to gain salvation it is necessary to participate in an introverted spiritual quest. Participation in worldly activities can easily become a means to confirm and strengthen personal faith in a transcendent God.

Anne Wilson Schaef describes the prototypical codependent/relationship addict as the "good Christian" martyr.⁴⁰ According to Schaef "Co-dependents believe that they are suffering for a holy cause" ⁴¹ The popular, stereotypical image of the good Christian martyr embodies the core codependent behavior of long suffering, caretaking, and passive/aggressive styles of relating. This stereotypical image needs to be separated from that of the actual martyr who follows their personal faith to the point of facing death. Martyrdom is the precise opposite of caretaking in that it involves a radical coming to awareness of and following one's faith and sense of self. In a sense, caretaking is the core of codependence in that it embodies dishonesty, self-centeredness, low self-esteem, fear, the need for external validation and control. The good

⁴⁰ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 54.

⁴¹ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 54.

Christian martyr embodies the caretaker, and the good Christian martyr is a celebrated figure in the church.

In a sense the good Christian martyr embodies fall/redemption theology. From my experience in the local church, good Christian martyrs:

1. Affirm their deep sinfulness.
2. Take seriously the introverted path to salvation.
3. Avoid fallen creation on a regular basis by being at the church when the doors open and remaining there until they close.
4. Takes seriously the biblical image of Christ as the Suffering Servant, and lives out this image.

The good Christian martyr embodies the paradox of self-centeredness and low self-esteem through caretaking. This does not exclude the reality that people exist whose faith is deep, and whose service is healthy, whole and an intimate expression of their spirituality. The issue is that fall/redemption theology does not nurture this sort of faith as much as it does the faith of the caretaker/good Christian martyr. The reason is that the good Christian martyr is a natural expression of the paradox between low self-esteem/radical fallenness and ego-centrism/being the chosen child of God.

An integral part of fall/redemption spirituality is its concern with personal salvation, and its secondary concern with issues of corporate sin and salvation. In this sense, fall/redemption theology often works not for the salvation

of the world but to reinforce its fallenness. Though good works are an important part of this spirituality, they are generally overshadowed by an introverted concern with personal redemption. In the tradition of the Book of James, good works are often seen as a necessary expression of personal faith.⁴² However, the works themselves are overshadowed by the issue of personal faith/salvation. It is faith that is primary. Good works are simply expressions of faith/salvation.

The stereotypical good Christian martyr codependent mirrors this relationship between faith and action.

Martyrs actually keep chaotic situations going by taking care of their drinkers, making excuses, making sure their households stay together, cleaning up the messes, enduring the outbursts, and so on, when blowing the whistle would have been the most caring thing to do.⁴³

While this quote focuses on alcoholism, the dynamics addressed apply to the all relationships in which a caretaker/martyr/codependent are involved. Caretaking, codependence serve not to change the world but keep it static. Again, the underlying themes are fear, low self-esteem and belief in control. The good Christian martyr represents a marriage between codependence and transcendent spirituality. This marriage is an easy one because the two share so much in common. They speak the same language,

⁴² "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." (James 2:17).

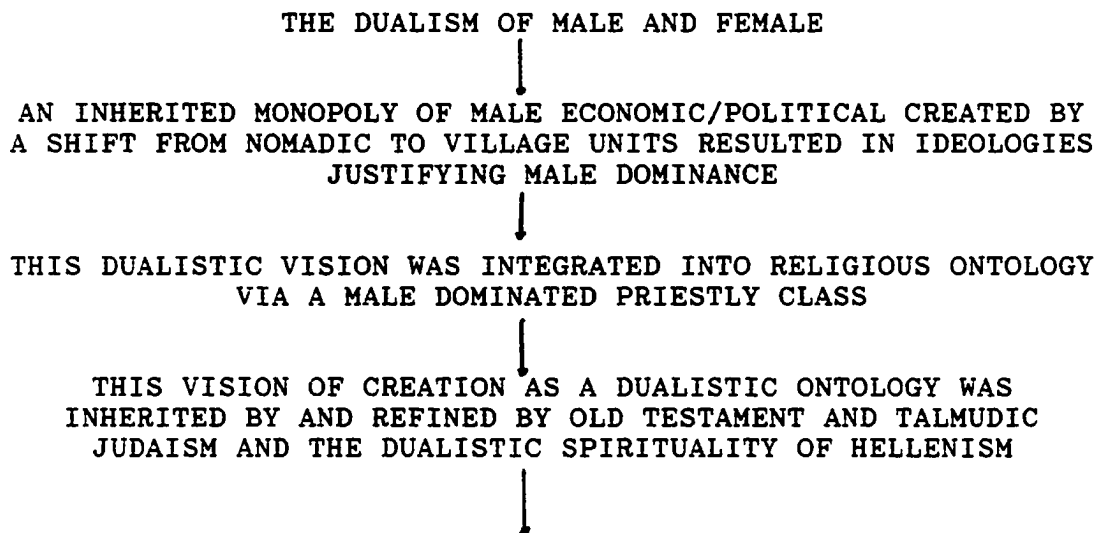
⁴³ Schaef, Co-Dependence, 54.

dream the same dreams, live out of the same beliefs and feel the same fear.

Chapter Summary

In both the addictive process and fall/redemption spirituality low self-esteem and ego-centeredness are paradoxically intertwined. Both operate out of core beliefs in the worthlessness/fallenness of the self, the inability of the person to fill their own deep needs, the need for external meaning/value/salvation, and a vision that creation focuses on them/operates according to their rules. This paradoxical self-centeredness and worthlessness forms the core of both fall/redemption spirituality and the addictive process/codependence. The two are inextricably intertwined. Both reflect the hierarchical dualistic ontology inherent in Augustine's ancient vision of radical fallenness and egocentric, introverted path to salvation.

This centuries old dance of death seeking life may be summarized as follows:



THE SPIRITUALITY EMBEDDED IN THESE WORLD VIEWS WAS BASED ON
AN ONTOLOGY IN WHICH THE WORLD WAS CORRUPT AND THE PRE-
EXISTENT SOUL BELIEVED TO HAVE FALLEN INTO THIS LOWER REALM
OF EXISTENCE



JESUS' WAY CALLED ON PEOPLE TO LIVE IN THE WORLD AS A MEANS
OF PARTICIPATING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD



AS THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY WERE INCREASINGLY INCORPORATED INTO
THE MAINSTREAM OF CULTURE THE WAY EVOLVED INTO A RELIGION
FOCUSED MORE ON THE PERSON OF JESUS THAN LIVING IN THE
KINGDOM OF GOD



AUGUSTINE FORMALIZED THIS FUSION OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND
CULTURAL IDEOLOGY BY ARTICULATING A THEOLOGY/SPIRITUALITY OF
RADICAL FALLENNESS, PERSONAL SALVATION AND TRANSCENDENT
SPIRITUALITY



THIS HIERARCHICAL DUALISTIC ONTOLOGY FOSTERED AN ASCETIC
SPIRITUALITY BASED ON A PARADOXICAL EGO-CENTRISM AND BELIEF
IN PERSONAL VALUELESSNESS



THIS TURNING INWARD, AWAY FROM THE WORLD, IN ORDER TO
ACHIEVE SALVATION FROM GOD THE FATHER IN HEAVEN BECAME THE
FOUNDATION OF WESTERN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY



SUCH AN ONTOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY SUPPORTED AND BECAME
INTERTWINED WITH THE ADDICTIVE PROCESS



THE ADDICTIVE PROCESS AND FALL/REDEMPTION SPIRITUALITY
SUPPORT AND REINFORCE ONE ANOTHER IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

THE ADDICTIVE PROCESS

FALL/REDEMPTION SPIRITUALITY

LOW SELF-ESTEEM
AND THE BELIEF THAT
WE ARE FUNDAMENTALLY
WORTHLESS AND UNLOVABLE

ORIGINAL SIN

WE ARE INCAPABLE OF
MEETING OUR OWN NEEDS

GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF
SALVATION



OUR NEEDS CAN ONLY BE MET
THROUGH AN EXTERNAL SOURCE

GOD IS TRANSCENDENT OF
FALLEN CREATION WHILE
WE ARE A PART OF IT

I AM THE CENTER OF
THE UNIVERSE

CREATION WAS CREATED
FOR MAN, AND ITS
FUTURE IS TIED TO OUR
JOURNEY OF SALVATION

I AM NOT FUNDAMENTALLY
CONNECTED TO OTHERS
OR CREATION

DUALISTIC ONTOLOGICAL
HIERARCHY

I CAN CONTROL OTHERS

GOD GAVE THE EARTH TO
MAN TO SUBJUGATE AND
RULE/ DUALISTIC
ONTOLOGICAL HIERARCHY

MEANING DOES NOT DWELL
WITHIN ME. IT MUST BE
POURED/INJECTED/EARNED
FROM OUTSIDE OF ME

FALL/REDEMPTION
THEOLOGY

While this summary touches only the high points, it does point to the fundamental similarities and shared world view of the addictive process and fall/redemption theology and spirituality.

CHAPTER 5

Creation Spirituality

Contemporary creation spirituality is a loosely organized spiritual movement centered on the writings of Matthew Fox. In essence, Fox is attempting to re-establish what he considers an ancient spiritual tradition focusing on original blessing rather than original sin. The main thrusts of this spirituality are: (1) perceiving creation as originally blessed rather than fallen; (2) healing dualistic perceptions such as matter/spirit, man/woman and body/soul; (3) a panentheistic vision of the God/human/creation relationship; (4) an emphasis on embodied grace rather than introspective salvation; and (5) a four-fold spiritual path.

The psychology inherent in creation spirituality is grounded in a view of the person as good and trustworthy. This is reflected in a gestalt/humanistic concern with the immediate quality of life. While this approach differs from ego psychology's concern with hidden motives and unconscious forces, these insights are not ignored. Traditional forms of spirituality have in large part focused on ego psychology's concern with introspection. This reflects an Augustinian concern with salvation through introspection. What Matthew Fox appears to be doing is integrating a more gestalt/systems/humanistic belief in the trustworthiness of

the person into spirituality. Thus, Fox is seeking to balance the predominantly introspective psychology inherent in traditional spiritualities with one concerned with the immediate quality of life. One contribution of this study is to make the dialogue between creation spirituality and these schools of psychology more explicit.

The relationship between creation spirituality and the institutional church is strained. While there are many sources of this strain the conflict appears to center on two primary issues. The first is Matthew Fox's focus on religion as event rather than institution. The dualistic splitting of body/spirit, inherent in much fall/redemption thinking, results in dividing the church into the dualism of institution/event in that religion as a felt experience is separated from religion as institution or organization. This is not meant to imply that Fox and others within the creation spirituality movement are inherently opposed to institutional religion. Rather, the affective element of religious experience is revalued in creation spirituality, and this value comes into conflict with the church as institution.

The core of this conflict, however, focuses less on content than presentation. Fox is not inherently anti-tradition or anti-institution, but, rather, adamantly pro-experience, event and affect. The effect, however, is that in his emphasis on the importance of religion as affective event, Fox appears almost reactionary. In the midst of his

adamant appeal to the importance of embodying religion, Fox pays little attention to how these embodied ways of being religious can be integrated into traditional settings. The immediate result of his presentation of creation spirituality as an embodied spirituality is a focus on spirituality as a means of celebrating life and human experience. In the midst of this focus he gives little attention to traditional means. Integration must come later.

The second issue is creation spirituality's emphasis on incorporating a wide diversity of religious beliefs and traditions into its spiritual, theological dance. This deep ecumenicism is reflected in Matthew Fox's idea of the Cosmic Christ.¹ While dealt with below, the essence of this concept is that Christianity has put far too much emphasis upon the person Jesus rather than the meaning of Christ. For Fox, Christ both includes and transcends the person of Jesus. Wherever and whenever love, mercy, compassion, ecstasy and deep mutuality are present, the Cosmic Christ is present. Deep ecumenicism is not only called for in Fox's theology; it is a requirement. Defining the person Jesus as THE Savior is to violate the deeper truth of the Cosmic Christ. As might be expected, this has endeared Fox to many who feel margined or excluded by organized religion, but

¹ Matthew Fox, The Coming of the Cosmic Christ (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

it has not endeared him to the Roman Catholic hierarchy.²

Again, the issue has to do with presentation as much as with content. The basic idea of the Cosmic Christ has been presented by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Edward A. Armstrong and Thomas Merton.³ A crucial difference is that while these and other authors have woven the Cosmic Christ into the tapestry of their works, Fox focuses on it as a critical component of his thought. Add to this Fox's outspoken nature, and conflict with the institutional church is inevitable. In short, one cannot fully determine whether Matthew Fox's conflict with the institutional church is more a function of theology/spirituality or style.

In way of summary, Matthew Fox perceives both Western-European culture and the Christian religion as being dominated by an introspective spirituality and by a psychology embedded in dualistic views of creation. This vision is reflected in fall/redemption theology and embodied in the institutionalization of religion. Creation spirituality seeks to reclaim the ancient traditions of the original blessedness of creation, the goodness of human

² For an example of this see Matthew Fox, "Is the Catholic Church Today a Dysfunctional Family? A Pastoral Letter to Cardinal Ratzinger and the Whole Church," Creation 4, no. 5 (November/December 1989): 23-25.

³ See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Human Energy (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969); Edward A. Armstrong, Saint Francis: Nature Mystic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); and Thomas Merton, Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander (New York: Doubleday, 1968).

experience and religion as a deeply felt human event. Though oversimplified, one can accurately say that the task of creation spirituality is to reclaim compassion and ecstasy as the heart of the Christian message. This process of reclamation has brought Fox into considerable conflict with organized, institutional religion, primarily the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Issues of theology, doctrine and discipline are involved in this conflict.⁴ Whether the core of these conflicts is theological, doctrinal or stylistic is a matter of perspective.

In its simplest form, spirituality has to do with our relationship with ultimacy. Within the Christian tradition this relationship with ultimacy has been described in a myriad of ways. An operational definition of spirituality offered by Gerald May is that it is "an experienced and interpreted relationship among human beings and the mystery of creation."⁵ The Anglican mystic Evelyn Underhill viewed spirituality as "a life in which all that we do comes from the centre, where we are anchored in God: a life soaked

⁴ Matthew Fox was officially silenced by the Roman Catholic office of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. The reasons for his silencing, as stated by that office, were his theological position on original sin and doctrinal beliefs related to original sin and the teaching function of the Roman Catholic Church. For a more complete discussion of this topic see Fox, "Is the Catholic Church Today a Dysfunctional Family? A Pastoral Letter to Cardinal Ratzinger and the Whole Church," 23-37, and; Matthew Fox, "Dear Brother Ratzinger," National Catholic Reporter, 4 Nov. 1988: 27.

⁵ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 2.

through and though by a sense of His reality and claim, and self-given to the great movement of His will."⁶ An oral tradition also exists identifying spirituality as the sum total of one's Christian life. Based on this oral tradition, spirituality is living in such a way that the Spirit has a chance. Put another way, spirituality is living in such a way that we are open to the voice of the Spirit in our everyday lives.

Each of these definitions points to the interrelatedness of person, creation and God. To deal with any spiritual tradition then, we need to deal with the theological and psychological underpinnings of that tradition and the spiritual path it sets forth. Therefore, my examination of creation spirituality will focus on: (1) underlying theology; (2) underlying psychology; (3) the four-fold path; and (4) a critique of how well it invites us to give the Spirit a chance.

Underlying Theology

Just as my discussion of fall/redemption theology was an overview, my discussion of creation theology will be likewise. In order to grasp Matthew Fox's creation theology, we need to address theological method and the issues of sin and grace/salvation, and God and humanity. Since this is a large undertaking I will touch only the basics, and will not attempt a systematic presentation.

⁶ Evelyn Underhill, The Spiritual Life (New York: Harper & Bros., n.d.), 35-36.

Since I have previously dealt with fall/redemption theology in some detail I will not repeat that discussion, but will build on it.

Theological Method

Creation theology and spirituality consistently begin with the belief that human experience is the beginning and ending point of the hermeneutical circle.⁷ The experience of God, self, neighbor, creation and the interaction of these composes the human experience. Thus, experience becomes the means of authenticating signs, symbols, rituals and the structures of organized religion.⁸

Traditional Catholic spiritual theology begins with the fundamental belief that Christianity establishes a new creation by bringing the victory of Christ over original sin to bear on the soul of the individual and the corporate spirit of society.⁹ The goal of spirituality is union with God. Out of this union creation is transformed through sacramental knowledge of God and marshalling spiritual forces from the world of the unseen. The key to this process is individual union or communion with God. This is reached through the traditional viae of purgation, illumination and union. While there are a wide variety of

⁷ Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology (Boston: Beacon, 1983), 12.

⁸ Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk, 12-13.

⁹ Stephen Muratore, review of "Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality," by Matthew Fox, Epiphany 5 (Fall 1985): 89.

spiritual disciplines within the Roman Catholic church, each is shaped by these fundamental viae.

In rejecting the fundamental truth of original sin Matthew Fox shakes the foundation of traditional Roman Catholic spiritual method. The viae of purgation, illumination and union no longer fit. They are, according to Fox, irrelevant categories of thought.¹⁰ By beginning with original blessing Fox does not need purgation.¹¹ Similarly, illumination is no longer a vertical concept, but involves embracing creation.¹² Finally, while union with God is still the ultimate goal, it is union with a panentheistic God embedded in creation.¹³ As a result, Fox abandons the traditional Catholic viae for a four fold path including the via positiva, via negativa, via creativa and via transformativa.¹⁴ While he follows the traditional spiritual method of drawing theology out of Christian scripture and tradition and offering a spiritual path based on these, his beginning point of original blessing is a fundamental challenge to traditional categories.

¹⁰ Matthew Fox, Meditations with Meister Eckhart (Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1983), 5-6.

¹¹ Fox, Meditations with Meister Eckhart, 5.

¹² Fox, Meditations with Meister Eckhart, 6.

¹³ Fox, Meditations with Meister Eckhart, 6.

¹⁴ Matthew Fox, "Meister Eckhart on the Fourfold Path of a Creation Centered Spiritual Journey," Western Spirituality: Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes.

Fox is exacting in his effort to establish creation theology and spirituality as an ancient Christian tradition. His intent is to present creation theology not as a new spirituality or an appendage of fall/redemption traditions but as an original tradition overwhelmed by later fall/redemption historical, political and theological influences. In order to do this Fox spends considerable time exploring ancient Hebrew and Christian scriptures and traditions. His goal is to establish not only the presence of creation traditions but their original dominance. In Original Blessing Fox begins each section with quotes from a wide variety of sources to illustrate the embeddedness of creation traditions in sources ranging from the Bible to the Talmud to the writings of major authors in various periods.

In pre-Augustinian times Fox focuses on the presence of creation traditions in the scripture and other supporting traditions and literature. Following Augustine Fox argues that creation traditions were overwhelmed by fall/redemption traditions within the mainline church. Where he consistently finds creation theology and spirituality is among the mystics. Fox believes that mystics are not as easily controlled by the accepted theology and spirituality of the church as those who remain in the mainstream. Thus they have more intellectual access to alternative Christian traditions, creation traditions in particular. Fox implies that the concern of many mystics for direct, personal experience of God leads them to an experience of God which

is profoundly creation centered. Fox believes that personal or mystical experience of God often results not in a fall/redemption God but a God of original blessing. In short, fall/redemption theology is a philosophical, political overlay, or betrayal, of the deep truth of original blessing. Embedded in this belief is that fall/redemption theology has more to do with control than with the experience of God.

One point which Fox makes repeatedly is that fall/redemption traditions have often been maintained by church hierarchies and theologians embedded in fall/redemption ways of viewing creation. Creation traditions, on the other hand, have been maintained by those outside of traditional church hierarchical structures, the mystics in particular, whose experience of God and creation focuses far more on original blessing and grace than original sin and salvation.

However, in order to follow this line of thought Fox must contrast creation traditions with fall/redemption traditions on a regular basis. This often results in an overstatement of the evils of fall/redemption theology and organized religion in contrast to the goodness of creation theology and mysticism. Another result of his categories of thought is that in order to establish creation as a legitimate spiritual way Fox must separate himself from fall/redemption traditions. This results in an Us vs. Them

dichotomy. In short, Fox's methodology results in another dualism: fall/creation.

Fox's task is a difficult one. Given that he states that fall/redemption traditions have dominated theology for two thousand years, recovering a spiritual tradition which he views as oppressed during this period is a challenge. Further, given that he sees this domination as almost invariably destructive he counterpoises creation spirituality as a positive presence. This forces him into the very sort of dualism he seeks to heal. It can only be hoped that as creation traditions grow and mature they can embrace those beliefs in fall/redemption traditions which are life- and creation-affirming.

Sin and Grace

One of the fundamental tenets of creation spirituality is original blessing.

Whatever is said of original sin, it is far less hallowed and original than are love and desire, the Creator's for creation and our parents' for one another. Our origin in the love our parents and in their love-making, and the celebration of creation at our birth, are far, far more primeval and original in every sense of that word than is any doctrine of "original sin."¹⁵

Fox's primary thrust here is that our origins, both physical and spiritual, are in love. If sin is conceived of as separation, lack of mutuality or dualism, then our origins are the very opposite of sinful.¹⁶ Biblically, the original

¹⁵ Fox, Original Blessing, 50.

¹⁶ Fox, Original Blessing, 50.

blessedness of creation is declared most overtly in Gen. 1:31: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (RSV).

Focusing religion on original sin and the quest for redemption not only results in a introverted spirituality which denies the original blessedness of creation but flies in the face of a profound biblical affirmation. Such a focus is sinful in itself in that it

both trivializes human wrongdoing and compounds it. Fall/redemption spirituality reduces the mystery of life to the problem of morality. It inculcates pessimism and cynicism by emphasizing human limitations and ignoring our God-given creativity. This in turn provides as escape from accepting responsibility for the condition of our world and our lives; we excuse ourselves as the victims of our inherited sinfulness.¹⁷

Focusing on human sinfulness and the fallenness of creation results in a rejection of passion, embodiment and sensuality. This, in turn, results in the demise of compassion. When we begin with the assumption of human sinfulness and the fallenness of creation we operate out of the implicit belief that all have erred and strayed. Consequently there is no built in motivation toward mutuality or sharing the joys of living. We become obsessed with sin, particularly sexual or bodily sin, and convinced that joy ultimately leads to excess.

Another result of such an intense focus on human sinfulness is an anthropomorphic bias. Humanity becomes the

¹⁷ Jane E. Strohl, "The Matthew Fox Phenomenon," Word & World 8, no. 1 (1988): 44.

measure of creation in that our perceived sinfulness is assumed to be the measure of creation. Original sin results in a bias, or perspective on creation, that does not allow other options. If creation is suffering under the burden of original sin then we must constantly be on the lookout for sin. Mistrust becomes inevitable.

One of Fox's fundamental tenets regarding sin is that if we look at creation through the eyes of original sin, we see sinfulness. If we look at ourselves as deeply sinful, fearful, lost and broken, we will see ourselves as such. If sin is inherited and inevitable then, that is the way we will live. Perception creates reality.

In spite of this perspective, Fox does not deny the reality of sin. Sin manifests itself as a loss of compassion for creation, neighbor and self. From the perspective of creation spirituality this rejection of compassion is born of our rejection of the gift of creation. Put in more theological language, sin has its origins in our rejection of God's grace embedded in the blessedness of creation. When we reject the bodies, senses, passions, creativity, dreams and ecstasy which God has given us, we reject God. The result of this rejection is that we are not only alienated from our selves but from world and neighbor. If there is anything which approaches the concept of original sin in creation traditions, it is our rejection of who we are as God's children in God's world. It is our conceptualization of original sin that is originally sinful.

It is our alienation from who we are that is the source of our brokenness. Only as we reclaim who we are may we be healed.

Note that Fox is a mystic. When he refers to loss of connection with self he is not referring to ego, but something closer to what Jung referred to as Self.

The Self is not only the centre but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of the conscious mind.¹⁸

The God-image does not coincide with the unconscious as such, but with a special content of it, namely the archetype of the Self. It is this archetype from which we can no longer distinguish the God-image empirically.¹⁹

One can, then, explain the God-image . . . as a reflection of the Self, or, conversely, explain the Self as an imago Dei in man.²⁰

Though their images differ in many ways, for both Jung and Fox the Self embodies the Imago Dei in unique and powerful ways. Failure to integrate Self and ego results in fragmentation. Similarly there is no call for the dissolution of the ego, or the individual will. What is called for is for the person to live in a balance that allows the Self to be the deep guiding awareness. Fox does

¹⁸ Herbert Read et al., eds., Psychology and Alchemy, vol. 12 of The Collected Works of C.G. Jung (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), par. 44.

¹⁹ Herbert Read et al., eds., Psychology and Religion: West and East, vol. 11 of The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, par. 757.

²⁰ Read, et al., Psychology and Religion: West and East, vol. 11 of The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, par. 282.

not go into a depth therapy explanation of the differences between self and ego. He does leave the impression that we have much better access to God when we are true to our Self. He also states that rejection of Self and God are intertwined.

To lose connection with self, in Fox's language, is to be out of touch with God. Fox sees much of this loss of mutuality or connection as sourced in living out of a belief in original sin. Such a belief results in a sense of separation from our sense of oneness with creation, other and God. This lost mutuality further shatters our sense of belongingness and leads to a spiral of sin and mistrust. Sin is separation, a separation whose roots are in the neglect or rejection of our original blessedness. As we reject our original blessedness we increasingly isolate ourselves from the joy of creation and so become ever more introverted and alone.

Redemption is accepting our original blessedness and the original blessedness of creation. Fox's understanding of acceptance focuses on surrendering and embracing this blessedness. Fox does not focus on the grace of God made manifest through the death and resurrection of Christ. Grace is inseparable from providence. From this perspective grace is

the gift of life itself, and faith becomes the corresponding trust that life is a giftIt is not the giving and receiving of forgiveness, just as the Eucharist is not presented as God's celebration of reconciliation but rather as an

opportunity for us to say thank you for the banquet of our lives.²¹

The act of faith, the acceptance of God's grace is embracing the gift of life which has been given us, and believing and accepting that that gift is ultimately good. Just as sin is rejection of our original blessing and the consequent shattering of trust, mutuality and belongingness, grace is deep acceptance of the blessedness of life and creation. We do not need to be redeemed by an act of ultimate sacrifice, death and resurrection. We need only accept what already is--original blessing. From this perspective the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not a sacrifice to save us from our sin. They are a lesson in the deep truth that love binds the universe together. They are also a deep lesson in how profoundly estranged we have become from love/creation.

For persons to accept what already is means that we accept our capability to make deep choices and accept deep responsibility. Rather than identifying ourselves as the victims of original sin, we become free, choosing and responsible creatures. We choose sin or blessing, separation or mutuality, mistrust or trust.

God and Humanity

The critical concept in Fox's understanding of God and humanity is panentheism. Panentheism is an affirmation that God is in all things and all things are in God.²² It is an

²¹ Strohl, 46.

²² Fox, Original Blessing, 90.

attempt to envision God as both immanent and transcendent without demanding that these be viewed in dualistic terms.²³ Thus, God's transcendence is not qualitatively different from God's immanence. God is in us, and we are in God. Yet God is also in all creation, from dandelions to galaxies, and all creation is in God.

The term panentheism was first used by Friedrich von Hugel in reference to the Pauline statement that "It is in God that we live and move and have our being."²⁴ Within Protestantism Charles Hartshorne and Jurgen Moltmann explored other implications of the concept. Hartshorne, in particular, focused on panentheism as a means of understanding the interpenetration of God and creation.²⁵ Moltmann took the concept and applied it to spirituality.²⁶ For Moltmann, as for Fox, the interpenetration and interdependence of God and creation is necessary for mystical experience to occur.²⁷

²³ Fox, Original Blessing, 90.

²⁴ Friedrich von Hugel, The Reality of God and Religion and Agnosticism (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1931), 107-26.

²⁵ Charles Hartshorne, Reality As Social Process: Studies in Metaphysics and Religion (Boston: Beacon, 1953), 25, 67, 120; and Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism (New York: Willett, Clark & Co., 1941).

²⁶ Jurgen Moltmann, Experiences of God (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 55-80.

²⁷ Jurgen Moltmann, Creating a Just Future (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 51-101.

While the word panentheism and pantheism sound similar, the similarity ends there. Pantheism robs God of transcendence by declaring that everything is God and God is everything. Panentheism, on the other hand, states that God is in everything and everything is in God. Panentheism, then, is an experience of the presence of God in the depth of who we are and in the whole of creation. It is a mystical understanding of God. It is not theistic in that it does not relate God to subject or object, but neither is it pantheistic in that it does not rob God of transcendence.²⁸ Panentheism is a way of seeing creation and self sacramentally in that it calls us to see creation itself as the primary sacrament.²⁹ The idea of sacrament is crucial to understanding the difference between panentheism and pantheism. Pantheism has no need of sacrament while panentheism does. Within a panentheistic vision of creation sacraments are crucial in that they "make the power of God's presence more emphatic, more recognizable, more fruitful."³⁰

A critical implication of this vision of God is that God can no longer be viewed in terms of omniscience or omnipotence. These demand some form of ultimate separation which is not a part of the mystical vision of God inherent in panentheism. Panentheism does not recognize a

²⁸ Fox, Original Blessing, 90.

²⁹ Fox, Original Blessing, 90.

³⁰ Fox, Original Blessing, 90.

qualitative gap between the Creator and Creation. Such a gap represents the ultimate dualism in that it reduces religion to "a childish state of pleasing or pleading with a God "out there."³¹

In panentheism God is not the ultimate controller, but the perfecting process. God grows in consciousness as the universe progresses. Given God's interpenetration, interdependence and omnipresence, God is in process with creation. Yet God is also the creative catalyst or perfecting process. Here is where the concept of passion, ecstasy or allurement arises. God's passion of and for creation is both the spark that created us and the fire that sustains us.

From the perspective of creation spirituality we are co-creators with God. According to Brian Swimme, "By pursuing your allurements, you help bind the universe together. The unity of the world rests on the pursuit of passion."³² As noted above, the issue of God's passion of and for creation is the spark that created and sustain us. In that we are co-creators with God, our deep passion, allurement and ecstasy unite us with the creativity of the universe.

It is easy to translate the words passion, allurement and ecstasy in shallow or purely sexual terms. Yet as used

³¹ Fox, Original Blessing, 89.

³² Brian Swimme, The Universe is a Green Dragon (Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1985), 48.

in creation spirituality, they describe a mystical experience of self and creation. They refer to the moving force of our being and of creation. In the creation tradition they share much in common with words such as faith, belief or calling. When we touch and express our deep passions, our deep ecstasy, our deep allurements, we touch the creative force of the universe. Thus, to be in touch with this part of ourselves and our creation is to share in the creative energy of God.

Embracing ecstasy, passion is central to being in covenant and participating in the Kingdom of God. A covenant is an intimate relationship between God and a person, community or creation. In covenanting with creation, according to Fox, God has stated in no uncertain terms that relationship is the context in which the Kingdom of God is celebrated. God is not simply doing things for us, but has joined intimately with us in a realized eschatology.

Jesus' statement that the Kingdom of God is within you may be interpreted in many ways, but for Fox, the critical truth is that the Kingdom is here. The Kingdom of God is the whole of who we are and who we have been called to be. Humanity need not strive to be reconciled to a transcendent God, or flee from a fallen world. We need only embrace who we are, originally blessed. Our shatteredness, separation, is profound, yet the path to wholeness is not by way of

rejecting our selves and our world. Salvation is an embrace.

Underlying Psychology

Since I have already discussed the introverted psychology embedded in fall/redemption traditions, I will not repeat the discussion. I will, however, build on it. Neither will I go into many specifics regarding psychological techniques that are compatible with creation spirituality. That discussion will occur in the next chapter. At present I want to identify underlying psychological currents or themes in creation spirituality.

I have noted previously that creation traditions are more gestalt than depth oriented. This does not mean that creation spirituality is not interested in the contributions of depth psychology. Matthew Fox frequently quotes C.G. Jung and other depth therapists. The issue is one of focus or emphasis. As noted previously, Fox sees fall/redemption spirituality focusing on achieving salvation through introspective retreat from a radically fallen world. Such a spiritual emphasis leads to an overreliance on an introverted depth awareness, and hence depth psychology. There is nothing inherently wrong with depth awareness or depth psychology. The issue is one of intent and result. If the intent of inner directedness is an escape from creation via a narrow focus on the self the result is an increase in the deep separation that is, for Fox, the core of sin. This is the intent and the result of classic

fall/redemption spirituality/psychology. This does not mean that inner directedness or awareness are inherently destructive or that depth psychology by nature leads to separation. It does suggest that such a spirituality/psychology can lead to an egocentric concern with self and a consequent lack of concern for creation or the integration of self, other, creation and God.

Fox seeks to balance this identification of depth psychology with spirituality by focusing on gestalt and systems theory. His concern with deep passion, ecstasy and allurement as living mysticism, along with his belief in the importance of embracing the blessedness of creation, also supports his focus on living in the present. Thus, Fox's underlying psychology is grounded in more than a shallow live for the moment approach to life. It is embedded in his vision of God and humanity, sin and grace.

Perhaps the most vocal spokesperson for the psychological component of creation spirituality is Jean Lanier. Lanier identifies herself as a poet, theologian, and mother of six who also happens to be a gestalt therapist.

Fritz Perls, the grandfather of Gestalt Therapy, used to say something like 'while all other therapists were working their way down to the hidden, I was working my way up to the obvious.' When we take responsibility for what we are doing in the present, we can experience much greater freedom. The image of Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt is a description of someone

who became fixated on the past, of someone who was unable to let go of the past.³³

Here, Lanier identifies the roots of Gestalt therapy's concern with the immediacy of life. Yet she also recognizes that to live only in the present is inadequate.

Any focus on the immediacy of life must be balanced with an awareness that we are people with a past.

Jesus reminded us that there are 'those who have ears, but hear not, who have eyes, but see not.' He might have added 'who have memories, but live not.' To be aware of the gift of memory and to say 'yes, I am now using those memories,' is to be able to look back without staying back. It is to be free to continue on our journey and not be left behind.³⁴

Lanier reflects Fox's concern with the immediacy of life without ignoring the power of the past.

The systems emphasis in Fox's underlying psychology focuses less on family systems theory as applied to the nuclear family and more on viewing the person and family in relation to the church, community and world. An example of Fox's familiarity with and use of family systems theory is an article in Creation on the family.³⁵ Fox combines an awareness of the nuclear family as a system with sensitivity to the larger cultural, ecological, economic and spiritual systems which impact the family.

³³ Jean Lanier, "A Dash of Salt," Creation 6, no. 3 (May/June 1990): 38.

³⁴ Lanier, 38.

³⁵ Matthew Fox, "Family: A Both/And Experience," Creation 2, no. 5 (September/October 1986): 9-11.

An awakening to the cosmic household of which we are all a part and are all a living family demands a deepening of our local roots, our local households. It does not follow, as the Phyllis Schaffleys would tell us, that the nuclear family must become more and more defensive with an ever thickening wall, and a deeper and deeper moat, protecting it. . . Family is the center that holds together. It holds us together as individuals. It grounds us, roots us in our self-awareness and other-awareness, in our living morality, in our celebration, in our sense of original blessing and our powers of trust and compassion.³⁶

Fox integrates an awareness of family system dynamics, through his images of the family as protected by a wall and moat and as the center that holds us together, with a larger vision of creation as a system. Most importantly, he is aware of the fragile relationship between the family, with its permeable and impermeable boundaries, and larger social and cultural systems.

An example of his application of family system theory and language to an institution is his response to the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith which ordered his silencing in 1988.³⁷ This pastoral letter and response to Cardinal Ratzinger, the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, is Fox's analysis of the Roman Catholic Church from a family systems perspective. In this article, Fox looks at the institutional Roman Catholic Church from

³⁶ Fox, "Family: A Both/And Experience," 9, 10-11.

³⁷ Fox, "Is the Catholic Church Today a Dysfunctional Family? A Pastoral Letter to Cardinal Ratzinger and the Whole Church," 23-37.

the point of view of family systems theory, and concludes it is operating as a dysfunctional family.³⁸

This vision of creation as an intertwining and interacting system is present throughout Fox's writings. His perspective on ecology and consumerism reflects a systems perspective³⁹, as does his vision of the relationship between animals and humans⁴⁰, and political institutions and faith⁴¹.

Fox's emphasis on economic and political systems and spirituality reflects his belief that for centuries spirituality has focused on the dance between the individual and God. By integrating systems thinking into his spirituality, Fox is inviting us to see spirituality as both an individual dance and a dance of the whole system of creation.

While Fox does not focus on family systems theory in the more technical psychological sense, others in the field of creation spirituality do. Jeannie Pieper reflects this concern for the family as system by stating that

³⁸ Fox, "Is the Catholic Church Today a Dysfunctional Family? A Pastoral Letter to Cardinal Ratzinger and the Whole Church," 28-32.

³⁹ Matthew Fox, "Creation Spirituality: Alternative to Bourgeois Living," Creation 1, no. 2 (May/June 1986): 10-12.

⁴⁰ Matthew Fox, "Animal Images," Creation 3, no. 4 (September/October 1987): 30-31.

⁴¹ Matthew Fox, "Empires and Atheism," Creation 6, no. 4 (July/August 1990): 24-25.

A family provides limits in a world that seems limitless, boundaries that focus and define situations. In a family you are forced to confront and cope with, even solve, every type of problem, to experience every type of joy. Family is a process that has a life of its own, and which continues forever. Even if you try, it is difficult, if not impossible, to run away and hide.⁴²

While integrating larger social and economic issues, Pieper approaches the family as a system or process. Further, she integrates family systems understandings of the family with spirituality.

And we get some small notion about what God must feel and think about us, God's family, forever changing, forever trying, forever growing, sometimes together, and sometimes oh so mixed up, but always part of the great and wonderful adventure that is life.⁴³

Pieper is pointing to a vision of the family and of God which acknowledges the place of the individual and at the same time recognizes the dance of the family as a system.

Clare Morris explores the themes of the wounded child, the nuclear child and the original child--the name given to the first nuclear bomb by the Japanese people.⁴⁴ Morris parallels the cultural dynamics of power, patriarchy and militarism with family system dynamics which foster the wounded child. A key concept in her work is fear. Morris

⁴² Jeannie Pieper, "Confessions of a Nuclear Family Member," Creation 2, no. 5 (September/October 1986): 16.

⁴³ Pieper, "Confessions of a Nuclear Family Member," 17.

⁴⁴ Clare Morris, "Who Parented This Child?," Creation 4, no. 6 (January/February 1989): 28-31.

sees fear as motivating power-based ways of relating which support patriarchy and militarism as well as wounding families.⁴⁵ She also sees both cultural and family healing in terms of the wise use of power.

In way of summary, the focus of creation spirituality is not on family systems theory in an overt way, yet it is clearly present when proponents of creation spirituality address the family. More importantly, systems perspectives are integrated into the very fabric of Matthew Fox's vision of creation spirituality, as well as the approach of others in the field.

While a private, interior spirituality is wholly supported by Fox and others, it is supported in the context of community and praxis. Rather than viewing spirituality as predominantly an individual matter, spirituality is set in the context of relationship. Spirituality has to do with our relationships with other persons, community, world, and God. This reflects creation spirituality's belief in the interpenetration and interdependence of God and humanity. Thus, the systems emphasis here is similar to liberation theology's concern with corporate spirituality.⁴⁶

The threads of humanistic psychology woven into Matthew Fox's spiritual tapestry are both subtle and profound. Fox

⁴⁵ Morris, "Who Parented This Child?," 31.

⁴⁶ See for example Gustavo Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984).

shares many of the fundamental beliefs of humanistic psychology: (1) striving toward an inner goal, often referred to as the self, (2) acceptance as crucial to individual and institutional growth and change, (3) the basic worth and dignity of the individual, (4) the person's free will or ability to choose one's own path, and (5) belief that both individuals and institutions are capable of profound change.⁴⁷ These essentially spiritual issues are present throughout Fox's works as well as the writings of other authors in the field of creation spirituality.⁴⁸ Since these themes were discussed in Chapter 4 and elsewhere in the present chapter I will not explore them further at present.

The Four Fold Path

Introduction

The traditional spiritual viae of purgation, illumination and union can be traced back to the second century philosopher Plotinus. For Plotinus, metaphysics and mysticism were inextricably intertwined.

⁴⁷ For a discussion of these concepts in humanistic psychology see Carl Rogers, On Becoming A Person (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 31-38, 107-20; and William R. Miller and Kathleen A. Jackson, eds., Practical Psychology for Pastors (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1985), 66-67.

⁴⁸ For an example of these themes in the writings of Matthew Fox see Whee! We, Wee All the Way Home (Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1981). For examples of these themes in other writers in the field of creation spirituality see Kevin McVeigh, "Awakening The Child Within," Creation 4, no. 6 (January/February 1989): 38-39; and Swimme, The Universe Is A Green Dragon.

We come to understand the world because our minds participate in the ideas which shape things and bring them into being: 'in perfect knowing subject and object are identical.' Things are brought into being by the operation of intellect on matter; matter denotes the dark formless raw material on which intellect sets to work. It is not actively evil; it exists only in potentiality There are higher and lower levels of things; their status is determined by the degree to which intellect in them has mastered matter. The lower levels are more complex and darker, but they are not positively evil. Unlike the Gnostics against whom he wrote, Plotinus made no sharp distinction between material and spiritual levels; all flows continuously down from the One⁴⁹

Plotinus did not believe that matter was inherently evil. While his metaphysics reflected a vertical understanding of creation, he made no sharp distinction between matter and spirit. Plotinus' scheme of creation contained four tiers. The level which most people occupied was simply that of minimally conscious life. Plotinus hardly acknowledged this level of awareness as a level of consciousness at all. The Soul-Principle was the level at which we become conscious of a higher principle of Soul which unites all souls, and the soul of the universe.⁵⁰ The Intellectual-Principle, or Nous, contains all ultimate Ideas or Forms; these are similar to Plato's Forms. Finally there is Plotinus' concept of the One. As described by Oliver Nicholson, the One "is the source of everything, it does not consciously create; the universe overflows from it, like a

⁴⁹ Oliver Nicholson, "Plotinus," The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality, ed. Gordon S. Wakefield (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 305.

⁵⁰ Nicholson, 304.

fountain spilling over."⁵¹ The three viae were a way of shedding what encumbers the soul so that it can rise higher and higher through intellectual mastery of matter. Plotinus understood the viae as the process by which we become increasingly conscious, self-aware creatures.

Augustine took Plotinus' philosophical understanding of matter and spirit as flowing from the One and revised it. He transformed Plotinus' vision of union with the One into a union with the God as the Good Shepherd.⁵² Augustine also kept Plotinus' three fold path, but shaped it to reflect his vision of fleeing fallen matter toward a spiritual union with God.

In its most traditional form, and the form which remains closest to Augustine's vision of spirituality, purgation is necessary to free the spirit or soul from the contamination of self, or ego, and world. Since the world is radically fallen, purgation almost always involves fleeing from the day-to-day realities of life. Illumination is gradually coming to awareness of the Imago Dei through the work of the Holy Spirit. Such a process can only take place when the person's spirit is increasingly free from the sinful influences of creation. The process is somewhat like an archaeological dig. Layer upon layer of dirt and scree

⁵¹ Nicholson, 304-05.

⁵² Nicholson, 305.

must be swept aside in order to come into more intimate contact with God; this is purgation.

Another image for this process of purgation and illumination is that of preparing a piece of land for planting. If the land is covered by trees and dense undergrowth, these must first be cleared away and the ground prepared for planting. Rarely will a farmer plant a major crop on a new piece of ground. Instead, the wise farmer will plant a less intensive crop the first few seasons in order to determine just how productive the land is. Slowly, over the course of several seasons, the farmer will come to know just how fertile the land is, and will plant increasingly demanding seeds.

Union is when farmer and land live in an intimate and continuing relationship. In a sense, they become one. In traditional mystical language, union occurs when "there is no two . . . the man is merged with the Supreme, sunken into it, one with it, centre coincides with centre."⁵³ Union can only occur when the land has been cleared, successive successful crops have been planted, and a dynamic and productive relationship exist between the land and the farmer.

Union should not be exclusively identified with mystical oneness with God. While this is part of the concept, it is not the whole. Union is living out of an

⁵³ Nicholson, 304.

attitude of loving trust in God which expresses itself in the whole of life. Union is a way of being in the world which, moment by moment, gives the Spirit the lead.

While there is increasing criticism of the three fold path in the current literature on spirituality⁵⁴, it is still a strong force in both Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant spirituality. The Greek Orthodox journal of spirituality Epiphany reflects this continued strength. The stated editorial policy of Epiphany is to maintain the purity of Greek Orthodox doctrinal theology. In contrast to the traditional approach of Epiphany, Mystics Quarterly, Studia Mystica and Studies in Formative Spirituality offer increasingly divergent and varied interpretations of the spiritual journey. While maintaining the basic three fold path, articles in Mystics Quarterly reflect a greater flexibility in and interpretation of the spiritual disciplines necessary to follow it. While the format of Mystics Quarterly is predominantly a scholarly, the format of Studia Mystica focuses on practical spirituality, and attempts to integrate Christian and non-Christian spirituality. The editorial policy of Studies in Formative

⁵⁴ Criticism of the three fold path focuses on its rigidity, escapism and overemphasis of ecstatic union with God. For examples of this criticism see Fox, Meditations with Meister Eckhart, 3-7; Maria Harris, "Themes in Women's Spirituality," Studies in Formative Spirituality 11, no. 2 (May 1990): 169-83; and Carolyn Gratton, "Spiritual Direction From A Foundational Formative Point Of View," Studies in Formative Spirituality 7, no. 2 (May 1986): 193-203.

Spirituality focuses on applying scholarly research in spirituality to the formation and development of personal spirituality. Many of the articles in Studies in Formative Spirituality reflect a view of the three fold path more as a historical phenomenon than a widely followed spiritual way.

In its various manifestations the three-fold path of purgation, illumination and union reflects an underlying theology and cosmology. In the same way, Matthew Fox's four fold path reflects his vision of the relationship between God, humanity and creation. More traditional visions of the three fold path reflect an implicit need to escape our fallen nature. Fox's four fold path reflects his belief in our original blessedness, and thus focuses on the importance of embracing creation. Fox's viae include the via positiva, via negativa, via creativa and the via transformativa.⁵⁵

One further thing which bears noting is that the idea of a spiritual path is not to be taken literally. Spiritual paths or disciplines of any kind are seldom assembly instructions on how to put together a personal spirituality. Spiritual viae are more like holograms, or like threads in a piece of fabric that are interwoven and function as a part of a whole. Purgation involves illumination and union, union involves continued illumination and purgation, and so forth.

⁵⁵ Fox, Meditations With Meister Eckhart, 4-7.

The same holds true for Fox's spiritual path. The via positiva, the celebration of self in relationship with creation and God, also includes each of the other three steps. The various paths are more a description of present awareness than a statement of an absolute spiritual or emotional state. Thus, each of Fox's four paths represent a focus of awareness. An appropriate analogy here is looking at a large and multi-colored tapestry. While we are constantly aware of the entire piece, it is often easier to grasp its total beauty if we focus on one section at a time.

The Via Positiva

The via positiva is an invitation into the theology of original blessing. "If creation is a blessing and a constantly original one, then our proper response would be to enjoy it."⁵⁶ A fundamental belief reflected in this theme is that the more we take seriously the original blessedness of creation the more we can live in compassion and sympathy for creation, and the more we can experience the joy of creation. Thus, the way to joy and compassion, two of the fundamental expressions of original blessing, is through celebration. To connect with the fundamental joy of creation is to connect with the Dabhar, or creative energy of God. This process is indistinguishable from reconnecting with our deep self. In essence, the first step on the path of creation spirituality is to reclaim the Word of God. The

⁵⁶ Fox, Original Blessing, 52.

via positiva is reclaiming our joy, and in the same instant, reclaiming the Imago Dei.

In theological terms, the via positiva is based in a theology of creation and incarnation. It focuses on: (1) celebrating the creative energy of God; (2) recovering our ability to savor and appreciate the goodness of creation through reclaiming the ability to enjoy our selves; (3) accepting humility, simplicity, trust and passion as fundamental forces in creation; and (4) reconceptualizing holiness as cosmic hospitality.⁵⁷ Put another way, the via positiva focuses on shifting our vision of creation from fallen to blessed. Instead of seeing creation as hostile we are invited to view creation as welcoming us. More important, the invitation to live and feel welcomed comes out of a belief that creation is an expression of the creative energy of God. Thus, to celebrate the fullness of being alive is not selfish extravagance, but participation in a fundamental truth of creation. Biblically, this via expresses the statement that "God is love and anyone who lives in loves lives in God and God in him." ⁵⁸

Art, poetry, creating with one's hands, music, sexual expression, dance, liturgy, gardening, story telling, and any other personally creative avenue may be used as active meditation in the via positiva. What is crucial in this

⁵⁷ Fox, Original Blessing, 34.

⁵⁸ 1 John 4:16.

path is coming to an awareness that spirituality is indistinguishable from creativity. Any creative avenue which helps persons express their deep joy of living, and thus join in God's creative energies, is acceptable.

Embedded here is the assumption that we must strip away our negative, or exclusively production-oriented, attitudes in order to touch deep creative joy. Whatever discipline is used to celebrate life must come from a sense of compassion, trust and humility. If grace is embracing the goodness of creation, then what we do is far less important than the spirit in which we do it.

A recurring theme in Fox's writing regarding the via positiva is embodiment and contact with the earth. Awareness of body through body work, consciousness-raising or creating with our hands is crucial to the path. In essence this path focuses on coming to joyful awareness of self, other, creation and God.⁵⁹

The Via Negativa

The via negativa is an invitation to confront the deep brokenness of self and world. While creation spirituality has a decidedly positive approach to spirituality, it balances this with a sense of darkness, silence and mystery. Its grace-full approach to creation is not without a sense of the brokenness of humanity.

⁵⁹ Maria Harris, "Themes in Women's Spirituality," 170-72.

One charge brought by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith against Matthew Fox was that his doctrine of sin was poorly developed and failed to adhere to Roman Catholic doctrinal standards.⁶⁰ The impression that Fox does not have a well developed doctrine of sin appears to relate his understanding of sin. In contrast to fall/redemption theologies, Fox does not focus on individual sin. While fall/redemption traditions focus on individual sins, mainly those having to do with the body, Fox approaches sin from the perspective of alienation/brokenness/separation. Put another way, Christianity has traditionally viewed sin from a highly individualistic perspective. Corporate sin has been interpreted as stemming from and amplifying individual fallenness; all of these are seen as rooted in fallen creation. This does not mean there has been no concern for corporate sin, but rather, that this concern has consistently been viewed in terms of individual sinfulness embedded in a sinful world. Fox does not deny the reality of sin, but approaches it far less as an individual issue than as an interplay of individual and corporate brokenness.

A variety of other theologians share a similar vision of sin. The Roman Catholic theologian M.D. Chenu approaches

⁶⁰ Matthew Fox, "Is the Catholic Church Today a Dysfunctional Family? A Pastoral Letter to Cardinal Ratzinger and the Whole Church," 27.

sin in the context of the desacralization of the world.⁶¹ According to Chenu, as technological culture increasingly defines the world not as a sacred place but as a tool, the sanctity of life and creation are lost.⁶² Respect for the sanctity of the person and of creation become subsumed under a technological morality. Sin becomes a corporate event.

Gustavo Gutierrez quotes Chenu at several points, particularly in his discussion of faith and praxis and the effects of mass culture on the individual.⁶³ Gutierrez, like Chenu, also has a corporate view of sin. However, while Chenu focuses on sin and technological culture, Gutierrez focuses on corporate sin in terms of politics, power and oppression.⁶⁴ Gutierrez, like Fox, recognizes that sin is an interplay of individual and corporate brokenness. However, in light of the historical focus on individual sin and his belief in salvation as liberation, Gutierrez focuses on sin as a corporate reality.

Another aspect of Fox's vision of sin, or deep separation, is expressed in the word mystery.

All mystery is about the dark. All darkness is about mystery. The Enlightenment left us with a pernicious notion that we were to conquer mystery

⁶¹ M.D. Chenu, Faith and Theology (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 219-27.

⁶² Chenu, Faith and Theology, 219.

⁶³ Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1973), 47, 202.

⁶⁴ Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, 237, 265-76.

itself just as we were to conquer the land and animals and our feelings.⁶⁵

One of the consequences of the belief in original sin and the radical fallenness of creation is a focus on fear and control. If the universe is inherently a hostile place, it must be controlled or managed, and we have reason to live in fear. As a result, darkness, mystery and the unknown become things to be feared and controlled.

According to Fox, this simply is not so. If creation is deeply and originally blessed, then it does not need to be controlled or feared, only respected, explored and accepted. This is tied into Fox's larger vision of sin in that the rejection of creation and of ourselves is based in fear. Our brokenness--our deep separation from self, neighbor and world--has its source in living out of fear.⁶⁶

Brendan Doyle sees the possibility of focusing on either fear or trust raised in the writings of Julian of Norwich.⁶⁷ According to Doyle, Julian of Norwich saw human brokenness not so much as an inherent sinfulness but as a sense of despair which is a part of life.⁶⁸ The focus of this despair, or "fearful awe," is the human state of being out of contact with the goodness of God.⁶⁹ Instead of

⁶⁵ Fox, Original Blessing, 136.

⁶⁶ Fox, Original Blessing, 132-9.

⁶⁷ Brendan Doyle, Meditations With Julian of Norwich (Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1983), 11-12.

⁶⁸ Doyle, 11.

either fleeing this "fearful awe" or becoming overwhelmed by it, Julian of Norwich focused on using it as a guide post pointing to a good and loving God. Our fear and despair are the very points at which we can best seek God.⁷⁰

The spiritual disciplines associated with the via negativa have to do with embracing our fears and letting them go; we embrace mystery and accept it as mystery. Much of this aspect of Fox's thinking appears rooted in the Rheinland mystic Meister Eckhart. A concise statement of Eckhart's spirituality is that the heart of the spiritual journey has to do with letting go of the world, letting go of self and letting go of God.⁷¹ This process of letting go focuses on surrendering our rigid images, stereotypes and fears, and thus emptying ourselves. In our emptiness we become open to seeing not only the oneness of creation, but the presence of God in the whole of creation. In psychological language, Eckhart invites us to surrender our fear and live in deep trust.

To surrender our fears we must first name our fears. To name our fears we must feel our fears and dialogue with them. Once again the key is a profound shift in attitude. Instead of doing battle with our fears, Fox invites us to embrace them.⁷² He does not describe how to do this in

⁶⁹ Doyle, 19.

⁷⁰ Doyle, 19.

⁷¹ Fox, Western Spirituality: Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes, 224-37.

practical terms beyond a general focus on consciousness raising. Based on his understanding of Eckhart and interpersonal dynamics, Fox uses the idea of letting go as the path to embracing our fear.⁷³ "Letting go is indeed an art. It is the surest meditative art of the Via Negativa."⁷⁴ The paradox here is that only as we name our fears and let them go can we genuinely embrace them. Fox draws this understanding of healing our fears by facing them from Jung.⁷⁵ According to Jung, to integrate the rejected parts of our personality, the shadow, requires embracing our fears instead of rejecting them or fighting against them.⁷⁶

Perhaps the most frightening part of the journey of the via negativa is that as we let go of our preconceived notions of world, self and God, we experience emptiness. This emptiness and silence is deeply frightening to most Westerners raised in a culture of fast paced television, quick cures and new, improved labor saving devices. Our images of letting go contradict much of our cultural training to be movers and shakers or caretakers. To let go seems to lead only to a meaningless void of passivity, or to imply that we are not capable of conquering that which

⁷² Fox, Original Blessing, 140-47.

⁷³ Fox, Original Blessing, 138.

⁷⁴ Fox, Original Blessing, 138.

⁷⁵ Fox, Original Blessing, 138.

⁷⁶ Anthony Storr, The Essential Jung (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 91-96, 212-26.

confronts us. Yet letting go, or sinking into the mystery of who we are, is essential to spiritual growth. "We sink into the depth and in this depth we find God, who dwells especially in the depths and in the dark. God who is indeed a superessential darkness."⁷⁷ It is only in letting go and sinking into God that we truly find ourselves, and embrace the totality of who we are. In psychological language this letting go and sinking has to do with: (1) naming our personal fear and brokenness and the fear and brokenness of the world; (2) surrendering our ironclad images of self, neighbor and God; (3) sinking into our own emptiness, loneliness and silence; and (4) embracing a deeper sense of self in relationship with creation and God.

The Via Creativa

The via positiva is the celebration of the blessedness of creation and our royal personhood. It is a celebration of the cataphatic God. The via negativa is an immersion in darkness, silence and emptiness. It is the embracing of the apophatic God. The via creativa is the union of the two.

In letting both pleasure and pain happen, both light and darkness, both naming and unnamings, both cosmos and void, we allow a third thing to be born: and that third thing is the very power of birth itself. It is God, the image of the Creator, coming alive and expressing its divine depths and divine fruitfulness. It is our creativity which is the full meaning of humanity's being an "image of God."⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Meister Eckhart as quoted in Fox, Original Blessing, 139.

⁷⁸ Fox, Original Blessing, 175.

A fundamental assertion here is that creativity is one of the essential features of God, and thus the Imago Dei in each of us. God is the God who creates out of nothing, and continues to create out of the stuff of creation. Likewise, as we participate in deep creativity, we become co-creators with God. What is meant by deep creativity is creativity which springs from both the pleasure and delight of being in the world and from embracing darkness. Both are fundamental and necessary components of deep creativity. Creativity which springs solely from joy lacks the depth which darkness offers. Creativity which springs only from darkness fails to embrace fully the joy of living and creation. To embrace both the pleasure and delight and the pain and confusion of living is to become increasingly genuine. Creativity is a critical component of the spiritual journey in that, as we begin to embrace both the joy and pain of creation, we can begin to embrace more fully who we are and who God is.

The difference between the via positiva and via creativa is the difference between seeking inspiration living out of, or expressing, the inspiration of being a child of God. Walking the path of the via positiva is to open ourselves to the love of God and the goodness of who we are, such that the Spirit of God is invited to flow through us. Walking the path of the via creativa is to bring that spirit into being through art. Matthew Fox's understanding of art is inseparable from meditation.

What churches need to do now to renew self and society is to take spirituality seriously; this means taking art seriously. Not art for the sake of art; not art for the sake of making banners or teapots; not art for sale. But art as prayer, art as meditation. Only art as meditation allows one to let go of art as production a la capitalism and return to art as process, which is the spiritual experience that creativity is about. Only art as meditation reminds people so that they will never forget that the most beautiful thing a potter produces is. . .the potter.⁷⁹

Art as meditation is an expression of the deep trust between Creator and created, God and humans. When we open ourselves to our original blessing, the via positiva, we become vessels or conduits for the energy of God.

Of course it should be emphasized that art as meditation presumes, as all of creation spirituality does, trust. A trust that out of silence, waiting, openness, emptiness one can and will give birth to images.⁸⁰

Bringing this deep trust in God and our goodness to fruition is the core of the via creativa.

M.C. Richards expresses many of the same themes in her work Centering.⁸¹ Richards vision of art and creativity center not on technique or medium but on spirit.

The creative spirit creates with whatever materials are present. With food, with children, with building blocks, with speech, with thoughts, with pigment, with an umbrella, or a wineglass, or a torch. We are not craftsmen only during studio hours. Any more than a man is wise only in his library. Or devout only in church. The material

⁷⁹ Fox, Original Blessing, 192.

⁸⁰ Fox, Original Blessing, 193.

⁸¹ Mary Caroline Richards, Centering in Pottery, Poetry, and the Person (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1962).

is not the sign of the creative feeling for life: of the warmth and sympathy and reverence which foster being; techniques are not the sign; 'art' is not the sign. The sign is the light that dwells within the act, whatever its nature or its medium.⁸²

Art, then, is more about the spirit it embodies than the particular medium. Fox and Richards share the same vision that art and meditation are indistinguishable. Creativity has to do with centering on or connecting with spirit, energy and deep creativity.

TO FEEL THE BEAT OF LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT AND FEELING AND PERCEPTION WORK IN US, PULSE, PERISTALSIS, RHYTHMIC PRESSURE AND ACCUMULATION OF MUSCULAR MOTION, WAVELIKE, STEADILY WORKING IN US, LEADING FORTH OUR ENERGY AND CONVERTING IT - CONVERTING, THAT IS TO SAY, OUR WILL. WE LIVE IN OUR BODIES. WE EMBODY SPIRIT IN ALL THE CELLS OF OUR BODIES, AWAKEN IT, LIVE IN THE FLOW OF CHANGE AND TURNING, AWAKE TO OUR ENERGY, AWAKE TO THE MOBILITY AND EVOLVING FORMS OF SPIRIT-SUBSTANCE.⁸³

The process of centering the clay on the potter's wheel and the centering of the potter are one. To walk the via creativa is to express our awareness of original blessing embraced on the via positiva. The via positiva is deep reflection. The via creativa is artistic praxis.

If the via positiva represents a theology of creation and incarnation, and the via negativa a theology of the cross, then the via creativa offers a theology of resurrection. From the perspective of the via creativa, sin is not a individualized privation of good.⁸⁴ Sin is the

⁸² Richards, 12.

⁸³ Richards, 66.

denial of the power of human creativity and joy, the denial of the Imago Dei. When these are denied, whether through excess asceticism or ignoring or repressing creativity, the result is a twisting of these elements of the human and divine Spirit. In a Jungian sense, that which we repress or deny in ourselves becomes our dark side, and no matter how much we repress or deny its existence, it will find expression. When creativity and imagination are denied, they find expression in sadism and masochism at individual and corporate levels.⁸⁵ When we deny our Imago Dei the result is sin, or separation from God and the people of God. The results of this denial range from personal emptiness to the twisted human attitudes that lead to racism, sexism, hate, greed and war. To say that the repression of creativity is the source of sin is an oversimplification. The source of sin is the denial of who we are, of our neighbor, of creation and of god. It is separation from self, other, creation and God. A key element in this separation is the denial of the blessedness of creation and the consequent denial or refusal of deep creativity born in embracing joy and darkness.

Salvation is an embrace. To be saved is to embrace the original blessedness of self, neighbor and creation. Fox understands Jesus as poet, dreamer, creator, lover, teacher and friend; a person who fully embraced the original

⁸⁴ Fox, Original Blessing, 231.

⁸⁵ Fox, Original Blessing, 232.

blessing of being.⁸⁶ Jesus embodied the via creativa. He was crucified because he lived out the truths of love and wisdom. Seeing these lived out raised fear and hatred in the fragmented human spirit. His resurrection was a proclamation that, in spite of our fear and hate, beauty triumphs over ugliness, life triumphs over death and love triumphs over hate.

The death of Jesus on the cross was meant to be the last instance of human violence toward the beauty of creation and toward justice-making, compassionate persons. "In his own person Jesus killed the hostility" or the dualism that makes one group of persons chew up another group, Paul writes.⁸⁷

The purpose of walking the via creativa is to reclaim our joy and to move toward a wholeness of spirit. Walking this path is to participate in the power of life over death, love over hate, and compassion over fear.

The way of creativity is marked by setting all creative activity in the context of meditation. Whether it is art, housework, writing, parenting, or gardening, the crucial element is to reclaim the element of personal creativity. Fox focuses on the idea of "art as meditation" as a means of moving from left brain, production-oriented attitudes toward right brain expressiveness.⁸⁸ The shift is more in attitude than productivity. Working and playing become means of

⁸⁶ Fox, Whee! We, Wee All The Way Home, 197-200.

⁸⁷ Fox, Original Blessing, 301.

⁸⁸ Fox, Original Blessing, 188-200.

self-expression and self-reclamation rather than means to an end. The same holds true for religion in general, and spirituality in particular. Instead of being means to an end, they become expressions of who we are.

Perhaps Joseph Campbell summarized the heart of the via creativa when he talked about following your bliss.

If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. Wherever you are-if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time.⁸⁹

Following your bliss means looking beneath the surface in order to touch and embrace depth. Walking the via creativa is to experience life and embrace our depth.

The Via Transformativa

To walk the via transformativa is to seek erotic justice. The via positiva focuses on the celebration of who we are, our original blessedness. The via negativa calls us to embrace darkness, silence and the pain of the world. The via creativa, emerging out of the via positiva and via negativa, gives expression to the energy of creativity. Yet creativity and imagination alone can be twisted into singularly destructive forms. Immense creativity is needed to build and operate an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, to design ovens to incinerate millions of people or to create an international drug cartel. Creativity and

⁸⁹ Campbell and Moyers, The Power of Myth, xvi.

imagination need criticism and direction. The via transformativa provides the feedback and guidance necessary to guide creativity toward the transformation of the world. In a sense the via transformativa brings the spiritual spiral full circle. To follow the via transformativa is to embrace the New Creation.⁹⁰ To seek erotic justice is to live out of compassion, celebration and creativity.

Fox sees compassion as the yardstick against which all action should be measured.

Our creativity in all instances is to be put to the use of compassion. When it is not, then racism and sexism, militarism and giant capitalism will co-opt the image of God in people and use creativity not to return blessing for blessing with but to curse and destroy . . . The creation-centered spiritual tradition considers compassion rather than contemplation as the fulfillment of the spiritual journey that takes one back to one's origins in renewed ways. It considers justice to be absolutely integral to the spiritual journey.⁹¹

The motivating force for this transformation to compassion is eros. At first glance this is disturbing because of the accepted dualism between eros and agape. For Fox, eros is the energy of creation and connectivity. Tapping into this energy requires becoming aware of our original blessedness, embracing our darkness and being willing to create in the name of compassion. Making this transition from eros as ego-centered sensation to eros as the creative energy of God requires the transformation of

⁹⁰ Fox, Original Blessing, 247.

⁹¹ Fox, Original Blessing, 247.

our vision of self, other, creation and God. Without such a shift in attitude, we inevitably bow to the god of self-centeredness. The purpose of the four fold path is to transform our attitude such that we live and breathe and have our being not in self-centered eroticism but in the creative, erotic energy of God. The bliss we follow becomes creativity and compassion.

Creation traditions see God not as an unmoved mover but as the erotic Creator of Eros.⁹² God is a God who delights, laughs, participates and most of all feels. Eros is feeling, not pornographic sensation. The erotic has become indistinguishable from the pornographic in our culture because of sexism and fall/redemption visions of creation. This is partly due to our cultural bias against feeling. As feeling has been denied, it has become a part of our shadow and has emerged as pornographic sensation. To be alive is to feel, and to feel is to participate in the erotic. It is the energy of life and creation.

This does not mean that agape is rejected. Agape has also suffered at the hands of fall/redemption traditions in that it is often reduced to disembodied piety or spiritual love. When eros and agape are stripped of their cultural overlays they become indistinguishable. It is not a matter of eros or agape, but agape and eros.

⁹² Fox, Original Blessing, 282.

Eros is the energy of compassion not only because it is the energy of creation but also because it is the energy of connectivity. To feel is to be connected to others who feel. This interconnectedness moves us away from Us vs. Them dichotomies toward awareness of mutuality in relationship. Eros is the energy of justice. Eros as deep awareness of feeling is the energy which can move us out of our ego-centered selfishness toward compassion born of mutuality.

Fox sees the power of erotic justice and compassion, the via transformativa, in the context of a theology of the Holy Spirit.

But since our origins were always compassion-this is the origin of the earth and the origin of our birth-to make contact with compassion is to make contact with our deepest past. This is salvific; it heals; it unites; it energizes and empowers one to make the future present as deeply as the past is present. It therefore brings about salvation by opening up a compassionate future.⁹³

Jesus and the prophets consistently viewed salvation in terms of community, love and justice. Their vision, though expressed in diverse ways, consistently reflected a belief that salvation and issues of justice and compassion were inextricably linked. Eros is the creative energy of God moving in the world toward justice. This creative passion is rooted in God's creativity which can be seen in every detail of creation. For Fox, this is the Holy Spirit at work.

⁹³ Fox, Original Blessing, 299.

Contemporary Creation Spirituality in Historical Context

In the history of Christian spirituality many new spiritual movements have emerged. While these movements are diverse, they share three similar dynamics relative to how they emerged from and contributed to their religious and cultural contexts. One common dynamic is the effort to reclaim a lost or underemphasized accent in the Christian faith. The spiritual movement around Francis of Assisi is an example of this.

While St. Francis did not found a school of spirituality, and no systematic Franciscan spirituality exists, his personal faith called attention to the mystery of Christ, the uniqueness of each individual's spiritual journey and was highly Christocentric. During Francis' lifetime two great forces were at work in the Roman Catholic Church. First, the Roman Catholic Church was seeking to maintain its wide political power after overcoming a series of political and military challenges by German Kings.⁹⁴ Second, in the midst of the power of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church was experiencing a strong resurgence which was expressed in the formation of numerous new churches and monasteries.⁹⁵ However, in the midst of this religious and political resurgence, the theology of the Roman Catholic Church mirrored the desire to maintain its

⁹⁴ Renee Fulop-Miller, The Saints that Moved the World, trans. Alexander Gode (New York: Gateway, 1945), 153.

⁹⁵ Fulop-Miller, 156-57.

growth and power. Its theology was rigid and legalistic and focused more on politics and power than theological grace and forgiveness. It's Christology was generally focused on Christ as king as opposed to Christ as servant.

In stark contrast to these, Francis' theology and spirituality focused on poverty, servanthood, humility and a vision of Christ as loving servant.⁹⁶ In time, Francis' spirituality was integrated into Franciscan theology and piety and was instrumental in reviving grace and the value of the individual in Roman Catholic doctrine and theology.

Another common dynamic is the inspiration of one personality. Many new spiritual movements have begun around individuals such as St. Francis, Ignatius of Loyola, St. Bonaventure, St. John of the Cross, and the Rheinland mystics Meister Eckhart and Teresa of Avila. These people began spiritual movements shaped by their distinctive beliefs and personality. While the lives and teachings of these individuals are diverse, each confronted the spirituality and theology of her or his day with a distinctive faith and discipline. Each was also highly controversial in the eyes of the established church of their day.

An example of this dynamic is Teresa of Avila's reform of the Order of Carmel in the 16th century. During this period of history the Carmelite Convent of the Incarnation

⁹⁶ Fulop-Miller, 153-58.

where Teresa resided had become, in effect, a haven for women seeking the religious life where little time was devoted to the life of prayer, and living was generally comfortable.⁹⁷ The religious life focused largely on routine and comfort.⁹⁸ Out of a series of mystical experiences and the spiritual counsel of St. Peter of Alcantara, Teresa worked to reform the order.⁹⁹ Instead of focusing on comfort, Teresa sought to re-focus the nuns on contemplation, and out of the subtle force of her personality and depth of her mystical experience the transformation slowly took place.¹⁰⁰ Opposition to such a move centered on the Roman Catholic Church's concern regarding the demand for women to become involved in examining their lives.¹⁰¹ Such a movement toward contemplation was seen as being a violation of doctrinal instructions regarding the role of women.¹⁰² Further, such a move threatened the comfort of the nuns who had invested themselves in a relatively comfortable religious life.

⁹⁷ Fulop-Miller, 347-48.

⁹⁸ Cammille Campbell, Meditations with Teresa of Avila (Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1985), 6.

⁹⁹ Colin P. Thompson, "Teresa of Avila, St," The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality, ed. Gordon S. Wakefield (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 374-75.

¹⁰⁰ Fulop-Miller, 367-421.

¹⁰¹ Cammille Campbell, 6-7.

¹⁰² Cammille Campbell, 6-9.

A third dynamic is the integration of new ideas or concepts from science, education, anthropology and so on with spirituality. Spirituality is a practice and process based in images of God, self, other and creation. These images are shaped not only by theology/spirituality but also by the culture. The dance between images of God, self, other and creation offered by theology/spirituality and those offered by culture is often an uneven one, with one set of images moving in directions unanticipated by others. Currently, quantum physics is challenging static or dualistic images of God and creation by identifying that energy and matter are not separate substances or processes. This, in turn, is impacting theological language about God.

An historical example of this dynamic is Ignatius of Loyola, whose spirituality incorporated new ideas about the relationship between a spiritual director and pilgrim.¹⁰³ In contrast to most of the spiritual texts of his generation, Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises were not intended to be used as a solitary spiritual discipline. Instead, Ignatius created a series of spiritual exercises and disciplines to be led by a spiritual director. The majority of spiritual texts of his day focused on sharing mystical experiences, and operated out of Augustine's doctrine of salvation. According to Augustine's doctrine of

¹⁰³ Anthony Mottola, trans., The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, by. St. Ignatius of Loyola (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1964).

salvation, the only means to salvation was through the intervention of divine grace.¹⁰⁴ This doctrine, along with the decline of education during the Middle Ages, resulted in a lack of interest in learning or in trusting the agency of human will. Since a person's only avenue to salvation was God's grace, learning or discipline were of little use. The exception to this was the monastery. Yet even in the monastery, learning was generally limited to scripture and theology.

The dynamics leading up to the writing of Spiritual Exercises are complex. Still, it would not be inaccurate to say that Ignatius' experience as a Knight and his exposure, through his travels, to the beginnings of the Renaissance nurtured his belief in the power of human will as a vehicle of salvation. Ignatius' vision was nurtured by the re-birth of curiosity, learning, and belief in human agency--the Renaissance. Instead of focusing on waiting for an intervention by God, the Spiritual Exercises relied on the power of human will, along with the Grace of God, to free self from the bonds of the world in order to act exclusively in accordance with the will of God.¹⁰⁵ In short, Ignatius fused his personal experience and awareness of the Renaissance to create a new vision of spirituality, and a new spiritual discipline.

¹⁰⁴ Fulop-Miller, 290.

¹⁰⁵ Fulop-Miller, 287.

Creation spirituality reflects each of these three dynamics of new spiritual movements. As a spiritual movement it seeks to reclaim the underemphasized accent on the original goodness of humans and creation, it focuses on the person and writings of Matthew Fox, and it seeks to integrate information from feminism to quantum physics to massage into spirituality. In short, creation spirituality shares the three dynamics I have identified as common to emerging spiritualities.

Critiques of Matthew Fox's Creation Spirituality

In its present state of development, creation spirituality mirrors Matthew Fox's poorly restrained eclecticism. Fox's passion for grounding spirituality in compassion and understanding sin as dualism leads him to seemingly any and all persons and perspectives which support his vision.

This particular tendency is revealed in Fox's use of cosmic categories in an uncritical, ahistorical way, which also makes it possible for him to read all of history through his own lenses, imposing his own concept of creation spirituality to bring together, under its categorical roof, an almost faceless collection of individuals and groups as empirically and historically diverse as Dante, Leonard Bernstein, Mechtilde of Magdeburg, Amerindians, Nicholas of Cusa, Roger Williams, gay liberationists, Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, and Starhawk, all members of what Fox calls the 'family tree of creation-centered spirituality' or the 'creation centered tradition.'¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Roberto S. Goizueta, "Liberating Creation Spirituality," Listening 24, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 106.

It is difficult to tell whether Fox is imposing his own monolithic interpretative framework on history or recovering, as he says he is, an approach to spirituality oppressed for much of Christian history.

Fox's Use Of Original Sources

There is evidence that Fox takes considerable liberties with his sources. One example of this is his use of material from Meister Eckhart and Hildegard of Bingen. James A. Wiseman, in an article titled Matthew Fox's Interpretation of Meister Eckhart, makes the point that Fox frequently fails to interpret Eckhart within his historical context.¹⁰⁷ Wiseman notes that Fox accurately identifies themes such as ecumenicism, the downplay of ascetical practices, the relationship between mysticism and justice and the goodness of creation in Eckhart's thought, but Fox appears to impose his own understanding of fall/redemption and creation traditions on them.¹⁰⁸

Kenneth C. Russell comes to much the same set of conclusions regarding Fox's use of material from Hildegard of Bingen.¹⁰⁹

Once Fox has de-historicized and, to a considerable extent, de-personalized the twenty-four visions he discusses in Illuminations, he is

¹⁰⁷ James A. Wiseman, "Matthew Fox's Interpretation of Meister Eckhart," Listening 24, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 31.

¹⁰⁸ Wiseman, 32-37.

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth C. Russell, "Matthew Fox's Illuminations of Hildegard Of Bingen," Listening 24, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 39-53.

free to associate the symbols he finds there with a wider symbolic structure and to take the meaning he uncovers wherever he will.¹¹⁰

Russell acknowledges that Fox accurately identifies themes such as love of creation and celebration of the body in Hildegard's works. However, Russell also sees Fox imposing so much of himself on these themes that it is difficult to extract what is Fox from what is Hildegard.

If Matthew Fox continues to deal with medieval authors as he has dealt with Hildegard of Bingen, we shall be left with a shelf full of portraits all of which, on closer examination, look very much like Matthew Fox in historical costume.¹¹¹

Both Russell and Wiseman see the same process of de-historicizing at work in Fox's interpretation of these two mystics. Yet Fox also identifies powerful themes in their works which do support his vision of creation spirituality. Fox does seem to impose his own vision of spirituality on at least these two mystics. Whether this is a fundamental methodological flaw in Fox's thought is more difficult to determine. What is clear is that Fox is adamant about his belief in creation spirituality, and is willing to draw evidence for his vision from seemingly any source. According to Conrad Pepler, not only is Fox willing to draw evidence from almost any source to support his understanding of creation spirituality, he also ignores the English mystics and inaccurately groups St. Augustine, St. Bede and

¹¹⁰ Russell, 47.

¹¹¹ Russell, 51.

other "dualists" together in his work Western Spirituality: Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes.¹¹²

Fox's eclecticism may suffer from the same advantages and disadvantages of going to an all-you-can-eat smorgasbord. On the one hand, the diner can pick and choose from a tantalizing number of dishes. On the other hand, one can not help but wonder how well each of the individual dishes is prepared.

The Beginning Point of Spirituality: Mysticism or Prophecy?

Fox appears to have moved from grounding his spirituality in history to a more ahistorical approach. This is illustrated in the changing vision of the relationship between mysticism and prophecy in early works such as A Spirituality Named Compassion and the Healing of the Global Village, Humpty Dumpty and Us and On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear and his latest work The Coming of the Cosmic Christ.¹¹³ In earlier works, Fox clearly sees social justice as the beginning point of mysticism by stating that it is the person's prophetic stance which defines authentic mysticism.¹¹⁴ Mysticism, then, emerges out of prophecy, and prophecy can only exist in a concrete, historical context.

¹¹² Conrad Pepler, "Creation Theology," Mystics Quarterly 15, no. 2 (June 1989): 86-89.

¹¹³ Matthew Fox, A Spirituality Named Compassion and the Healing of the Global Village: Humpty Dumpty and Us (Minneapolis: Winston, 1979); On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear (New York: Paulist, 1972); and The Coming of the Cosmic Christ.

¹¹⁴ Fox, On Becoming a Musical, Mystical Bear, 94.

Roberto S. Goizueta notes that in The Coming of The Cosmic Christ Fox's methodology grounds prophecy, social justice and compassion in mysticism,

or more specifically in 'psychic justice,' which he identifies with mysticism: one's commitment to social justice is but the external projection of an 'internal balance,' or psychic justice achieved in mysticism.¹¹⁵

This shift in method results in a far more individual, privatized vision of mysticism and justice. In The Coming of the Cosmic Christ, mysticism and the prophetic spring from within the person rather than emerging from a concrete historical setting. One result of this shift is that Fox's spirituality becomes far more vulnerable to the critique that it lacks the element of socio-cultural awareness. Put another way, by abstracting mysticism from praxis, Fox is far more vulnerable to creating a spirituality for the middle-class of North America and Western Europe.

Without the socio-analytic critique which unmasks our own participation in oppressive social structures, any theological movement is susceptible to cooptation by the dominant ideology.¹¹⁶

This dynamic would appear to reflect the fact that Fox's earlier works offer far more practical suggestions for individual and social action than his later works.

One example of this dynamic is Fox's four fold path. While Fox's four viae emulate tradition, they do not offer a

¹¹⁵ Goizueta, 95.

¹¹⁶ Goizueta, 109.

readily accessible spiritual discipline or structure. What they do offer is permission and support to seek one's own path within the broad outline of the four fold path. This is both a strength and weakness. The strength is that the viae provide considerable freedom for persons to seek their own paths while also stressing the importance of integrating social awareness/action into spirituality. The weakness is that just as people need freedom, people also need clear guidelines. For example, Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises offer concrete guidelines which transform his thought into a usable spiritual discipline. Fox does not provide such a concrete guide or discipline. Part of his thinking here appears to be a reluctance to impose a distinct structure onto the spiritual journey that restricts the movement of the Cosmic Christ. While this is a defensible point, lack of structure also reinforces the critique that Fox's spiritual vision does not have a clear historical context. Further, the social awareness/action component is largely theoretical and abstract. Fox is clear that working toward the healing of racism, sexism and destruction of the environment are an integral part of the spiritual journey. However, Fox's vision is that the source of these wounds may be that people lack a viable cosmology with which to address their cosmic loneliness.¹¹⁷ Without a vision of where we fit in creation, we resort to drugs,

¹¹⁷ Fox, The Coming of the Cosmic Christ, 2.

alcohol and other behavior which provide quick fixes for our emptiness.¹¹⁸

While this perspective is valid, Fox seems to underplay the power of corporate evil and political and economic forces in the world. Fox's vision appears to be that as individual's at the grass roots level increasingly embrace the Cosmic Christ they can work toward the transformation of corporate evil. Put another way, as individuals increasingly develop a dynamic spirituality two things happen: (1) there is no longer need the short term fixes provided by drugs and other escapist behavior; and (2) it becomes increasingly possible to address the social, economic and political structures which enable oppression. This view appears to embrace a liberation theology vision of the transformation of corporate evil. The problem with Fox's vision at this point is that his spiritual language does not have a consistent focus on concrete historical realities. Fox uses language such as psychic justice or global justice without grounding these in everyday life or history.¹¹⁹ This returns to the issue that in such works as The Coming of the Cosmic Christ, Fox sees prophecy as grounded in mysticism, and not the other way around. Put another way, Fox believes that as we change cosmologies we will change the world.

¹¹⁸ Fox, The Coming of the Cosmic Christ, 2.

¹¹⁹ Fox, The Coming of the Cosmic Christ, 1-9; Goizueta, 95.

This is in considerable contrast to the approach of Latin American liberation theology.

From his socio-historical perspective in solidarity with the Latin American poor, Boff identifies bourgeois society--not the Church, or Augustine, or faulty cosmologies and theologies--as the principle threat to a creation--centered spirituality. Another Latin American liberation theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez, argues that fall/redemption perspectives and creation-centered perspectives are not opposed but are mutually implicit within a liberation perspective.¹²⁰

Roberto S. Goizueta frames his critique of Fox's spiritual theology in terms of God's preferential option for the poor.¹²¹ From Goizueta's perspective, Fox has increasingly failed to ground his spirituality in history.¹²²

While Fox's earlier work developed very clearly the intrinsic relationship between mysticism and prophecy as one rooted in a commitment to justice, his most recent work has tended to assimilate prophecy within mysticism, or an "affirmation of the world as a whole. . . ." In On Becoming a Musical Mystical Bear Fox is careful to ground authentic mysticism in a praxis of solidarity with the oppressed: his or her prophetic stance is what defines the authentic mystic. . . . Thus, while some of his earlier work grounds mysticism in prophecy, or the commitment to social justice, his recent work grounds mysticism in psychic justice, a phenomenon fundamentally internal to the individual.¹²³

In way of summary, Fox believes that as we change cosmologies we will change the world, but Latin American liberation theologians are quick to point out that such an

¹²⁰ Goizueta, 101.

¹²¹ Goizueta, 87-93.

¹²² Goizueta, 95.

¹²³ Goizueta, 95.

approach is vulnerable to forgetting the realities of history.

The creation spirituality phenomenon is in many ways a Matthew Fox phenomenon. Matthew Fox is a Dominican scholar in the tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhart. Following in their paths, he seems to function as a champion of those who feel excluded and oppressed by ecclesiastical teaching and practice.¹²⁴

He does not speak as a disgruntled former churchman but as a critic from within. Fox understands himself to be an authentic Catholic, wresting the truth back from the hands of a disfiguring hierarchy and clearing the air for many who are suffocating spiritually, Catholic and Protestant alike. His Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality carries ecumenism to new lengths with a curriculum that includes offerings in the Native American tradition, goddess spirituality, and such social concerns as the peace movement and deep ecology.¹²⁵

Fox is blunt, direct, passionate, on occasion flippant, and above all charismatic in his intensity and passion for the original blessedness of creation. His style invokes impassioned responses from both his followers and his critics. He is an almost perfect expression of the post Vatican II concern for openness, flexibility and renewal within the Catholic church. At issue, however, is the degree of that openness, flexibility and renewal. While Vatican II cracked open the doors and windows of the

¹²⁴ Strohl, 43.

¹²⁵ Strohl, 43.

Catholic church many believe that Fox is removing them from their hinges.

Three Theological Issues

A review of Fox's most popular book, Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality, in the Greek Orthodox journal of spirituality Epiphany is scathing.¹²⁶ In summary, the review says that: (1) his references to fall/redemption theology are so general as to be largely inaccurate; (2) his understanding of original sin is shallow; (3) the creation spirituality tradition he identifies is non-existent in either scripture or tradition; and (4) his modernist spirituality is a picture of anti-traditional thought.¹²⁷ The concluding paragraph of the review states:

Reasonably enough, Fox's 'spirituality' doesn't promise sanctity. It sets compassion, loosely defined, as its aim rather than holiness or contemplation. It does not aim at creating true prophets or saints but at producing romantic social workers and politicians. This is all it can do, for to strive for holiness it would have to struggle in the grace of the resurrection with the metaphysical and cosmological fact that the world we live in is not a pure expression of the original blessing of creation, but is an ailing image of it, diseased in fact by the presence in Man of original sin.¹²⁸

The review identifies three theological issues which bear discussing. First, Fox's vision of original sin and

¹²⁶ Muratore, 86-90.

¹²⁷ Muratore, 88.

¹²⁸ Muratore, 90.

fall/redemption spirituality is general and often reductionistic. In his passion to identify the ills of fall/redemption theology, he reduces it to a catch all for theological, ethical and moral traditions he sees as destructive. He rarely strays from identifying various ills as having their intellectual source in hierarchical visions of creation. For Fox, the sin behind all sins is dualism. Yet in his passion, he presses the credibility of his thinking to the breaking point. He leaves the reader with the impression that the detrimental effects of original sin and hierarchical dualistic ontology are omnipresent and all but inescapable. Fox's propensity for making broad and all-inclusive statements resembles Anne Wilson Schaef's linkage of social and cultural ills with the addictive process. While such all-encompassing observations may identify significant dynamics within a culture, by their very nature they come across as overly simplistic.

The idea that the addictive process and fall/redemption theology share a similar vision of the person and creation is a central theme of this dissertation. My contention is that both urge persons to surrender themselves to an external source of authority and meaning due to internal meaninglessness. Both also envision the world as a hostile place. I am not comfortable with how these two thinkers universalize their concepts. In attempting to make their point, both fall into reductionistic ways of thinking and viewing the world.

Fox's beginning point is the doctrine of original sin and the fall/redemption traditions which have grown out of it. He does an excellent job of tracing how individual oppression is intertwined with belief in original sin. Yet in doing so, he states in effect that this doctrine is all but the source of sin itself. It is here that his vision of human sinfulness becomes reductionistic. Schaef dances a similar dance except that it is the addictive process that she identifies as the source of a broad spectrum of human ills.

Ellen M. Ross touches on many of the same issues in terms of Fox's approach to sin and human potential.¹²⁹ In particular, Ross focuses on what she perceives as Fox's failure to take into account the ambiguity of creation.¹³⁰

Certainly, Fox has a point to make in suggesting that a religion or an institutions which calls for spiritual renewal but focuses only on wrong-doing or faultiness has itself become distorted. But one should be cautious of a wholesale movement to the other side in affirming only the goodness of human nature. While the Christian tradition is firm in its commitment to the goodness of human nature, it also has a keen awareness of the prevalence and tenacity of human sin. Fox is certainly aware of this, but I wonder whether he has taken the universal human experience of brokenness or alienation as seriously as he might.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Ellen M. Ross, "Prophecy, Mysticism, and Creation-Centered Spirituality," Listening 24, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 8-24.

¹³⁰ Ross, 17.

¹³¹ Ross, 17.

Put another way, Ross is concerned that Fox fails to take seriously human pathos, or he reduces it to dualism.¹³²

Tiina Allik believes that while Fox is accurate in his belief that much of Christian theology has compromised the belief that creation is good, he is mistaken in his analysis of how this has occurred.¹³³

Fox is right in saying that immeasurable damage has been done through the teaching of the doctrine of original sin. But Fox makes two mistakes in his polemic. First, he fails to understand that such damaging uses of the teaching are also counter to the intent and internal logic of the concept of original sin, as it is found in the mainstream Augustinian tradition. Second, he fails to distinguish between original sin as a concept that explains the origin, transmission, and universal presence of sin, and original sin as a concept which entails a particular description of what is and is not sinful.¹³⁴

Allik believes that the doctrine of original sin does not teach that human nature is fundamentally sinful. Her perspective on the doctrine is that it reflects the Genesis accounts of creation as being good, and sin as being human choice to oppose the will of God. Thus, sin is a choice, and does not reflect on the goodness of creation. Her second point is that the doctrine of original sin does not entail a specific account of what is and is not sinful. From her perspective the doctrine of original sin

¹³² Ross, 15.

¹³³ Tiina Allik, "Matthew Fox: On the Goodness of Creation and Finitude," Listening 24, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 55.

¹³⁴ Allik, 57.

teaches the collective responsibility of human beings for human sin, as well as the ubiquity of sin among humans and the universal need for salvation. It does not entail a specific account of what is included in human sin. What one considers to be part of the goodness of created human nature and what one considers to be sinful in human beings is separable from whether or not one considers original sin as a useful concept for explaining the origin, transmission, and universal presence of sin.¹³⁵

Allik sees Fox misinterpreting the original intent of the doctrine of original sin, though she also acknowledges that the intent of the doctrine and how it is expressed within the Christian faith are not always the same.¹³⁶

Irrespective of the limitations of Fox's vision of original sin, a consistent thread running through Allik and Ross' critiques is that Fox has touched on a crucial issue. One contribution both of these critics acknowledge Fox making is his focus on the goodness of creation and the pain of dwelling too long on human sinfulness.¹³⁷ There is a clear sense present in each of the reviews that while Fox oversimplifies the complex issue of human sinfulness and the place the doctrine of original sin plays in the Church's focus on sin his fundamental critique and direction is of importance.

The second theological issues that bears discussion is that in presenting fall/redemption and creation traditions.

¹³⁵ Allik, 59.

¹³⁶ Allik, 55.

¹³⁷ For example, see Ross, 21-22, and; Allik, 55.

Fox creates a dualism between fall/redemption and creation traditions. This is particularly disturbing because of his belief that embracing darkness, the via negativa, is a way we are healed. In reading and listening to Fox, I come away with the distinct impression that fall/redemption traditions are to be conquered by the forces of light and creation, rather than embraced and healed. I do not question that Fox accurately identifies dynamics in the doctrine of original sin which have a negative impact on self-esteem and widen the distance between God and humanity. Nor do I question that original blessing is a deep truth which has been largely ignored, or oppressed, by the church. What I do question is the process of speaking about healing and compassion in one moment, and in the next creating a new dualism between fall/redemption and creation traditions.

The dualism Fox creates between fall/redemption and creation theologies appears to have two sources. The first source is Fox's polemic style. In order to establish creation spirituality as an ancient tradition, Fox sets it in stark contrast to what he terms fall/redemption traditions. In order to establish and defend his belief that the goodness of creation, not original sin, should be the primary focus of theology and spiritual life, Fox overstates his case regarding the goodness of creation traditions and the damage caused by fall/redemption traditions. His passion for creation spirituality forces him into mandating a choice between either fall/redemption

or creation traditions. In his passion he sacrifices careful analysis for persuasion. Fox appears to so distrust the labyrinthine language of academic religion he goes to the opposite extreme in order to sell his belief to a more general readership.¹³⁸

A second reason for his treatment of fall/redemption and creation traditions as polar categories may be the influence of Jung. Woven throughout Fox's thought are polar understandings of left brain/right brain and masculine/feminine.¹³⁹ While Fox focuses on integration and balance, he begins such a discussion with an understanding of personality focused on typologies of complimentary characteristics.¹⁴⁰ Fox uses this Jungian, dualistic language to talk about reality, and the need for balance. This may be one source of his treatment of fall/redemption and creation traditions in dualistic terms. This focus on dialectic instead of dialogue effectively creates another dualism. While his division of theology and spirituality into fall/redemption and creation traditions may be useful, his Us vs. Them approach leads him back into, according to Fox, the sin behind sins of dualism.

¹³⁸ Allik, 70.

¹³⁹ See for example Fox, Whee! We, Wee All The Way Home, 135-37.

¹⁴⁰ For a more complete discussion of this point see Ross, 20.

The third theological critique of Fox's understanding of creation spirituality is his treatment of sin and salvation. I do not agree with the profound sense of human sinfulness implicit in the Muratore's interpretation of original sin.¹⁴¹ I do believe, however, that he points to a real limitation in Fox's theology. One of Fox's fundamental beliefs is that removing the weight of original sin from the human spirit will inspire the will to live in compassion. Put another way, to have the opportunity to live in justice and compassion does not mean having the will to do so. Though religion, politics and spirituality have done much to encourage us to turn away from the world and into ourselves, human sin cannot be reduced to this dynamic. Aberrant spiritualities have undoubtedly fostered our brokenness, but they are not responsible for the whole of it. One concept that can be read into Fox's theology is that, once the context of original sin is removed, the power of positive spirituality is adequate to deal with human sin/brokenness. This is undoubtedly an oversimplification of his thought, but he does appear to believe that if we can embrace our original blessedness we can be healed. This may very well be so. The issue seems to rest on the word if. If we can embrace our original blessedness then we can be healed, but there may be more keeping us from embracing that truth than aberrant spirituality.

¹⁴¹ Muratore, 89.

What seems to elude us is an inner change or new vision that transforms our self-centeredness into compassion. Fall/redemption, at its best, offers that transformation as a gift from God through redemption in Christ. Matthew Fox proposes that transformation comes through the divine grace of creation. He rightly opposes any spirituality which encourages us to retreat from our responsibility for creation and from our own deep goodness. Still, he seems to underestimate our capacity to take our original blessing and transform that into another form of self-centeredness. We are just as capable of being selfish about our original blessedness as we are about our salvation from on high. Fox contends that if we truly embrace our original blessing, there will be no need for self-centeredness. If we embrace our original blessing, we will know that we are each part of an interconnected world. I hope he is correct.

The challenges inherent in any transformation are deep. They reach beyond any one institution, tradition or culture. The first words, and the whole theme, of Hermann Hesse's novel Demian touches the heart of this challenge. "I wanted only to try to live in accord with the promptings which came from my true self. Why was that so very difficult?"¹⁴² The Apostle Paul mirrors this quest and this challenge. "I can

¹⁴² Hermann Hesse, Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), n.p.

will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."¹⁴³

Another issue has to do with hierarchy. We are drawn paradoxically to self-centeredness and self-surrender. Whether this is by nature, nurture or some synthesis of the two is open to debate. By self-surrender I mean a surrender of responsibility for ourselves, our neighbors and creation to some higher power. Responsibility weighs heavily on us, and we appear eager to give it away. Fox indirectly identifies this existential anxiety and notes how fall/redemption traditions feed it. Original sin confirms that we are fallen and must be saved by an external God who is far greater and more powerful than we are. He is the Father we never had, and we must escape the world in order to draw closer to him.

In response to this dynamic, Fox offers panentheism. In this vision of creation, God is in everything and everything is in God. God is no longer an external creator and savior, but an intimate cosmic catalyst. Grace is embedded in creation. Fox accurately identifies the need to transform religious hierarchy into spiritual mutuality. He also recognizes the apparent human need for something which transcends us, something greater than us. In Fox's theology God is greater, yet not in a hierarchical way. Panentheism maintains both God's immanence and transcendence.

¹⁴³ Rom. 7:18a-19.

Fox accurately identifies and speaks to many of the faults and failings of fall/redemption theology. He offers a much needed balance to the hierarchical ways of being, low self-esteem, ego-centeredness and oppression fostered by traditional ways of being religious. Yet Fox's theology and spirituality are not without their limitations.

Fall/redemption theology is not the enemy, and creation centered theology is not the full answer. If original sin and fall/redemption traditions are somehow expressions of our fear of freedom, as will be discussed in chapter 6, then to battle against them is to give them greater strength. However, if Fox is seeking to name these fears in order to heal them, then being less polemic in his presentation may better serve his quest.

Giving the Spirit a Chance

At the beginning of this chapter I identified one of the criteria for evaluating any spirituality as the degree to which it leaves room for the Spirit. I believe Fox's vision of creation spirituality gives the Spirit a chance to speak in unique and powerful ways. Creation spirituality is more gentle, playful, creative and permission-giving than much of traditional Christian spirituality. It invites people to experience the joy of the dance of faith and offers a genuine and readily accessible vision of wholeness.

Fox's vision of creation spirituality can also be seen as limiting the Spirit's voice due to its cultural context. Fox is speaking, in large part, to North American, middle

class people who feel alienated by oppressive religious institutions and theologies. His spirituality can be seen as focusing more on the self-actualization of the financially comfortable than God's preferential option for the poor. In this sense, Fox's spiritual vision may be seen as prescribing and limiting the power of the Spirit to speak to all humankind. Even within North American and Western European culture, Fox's thought may be limiting the Spirit by focusing so intently on human potential; perhaps he fails to listen deeply to the Spirit's voice in the dark night of the soul.¹⁴⁴ Further, when Fox strays into dualistic presentations of fall/redemption and creation traditions he can be understood as saying the Spirit speaks only, or best, in the language of creation spirituality. Thus, he limits the power of the Spirit to speak through much of Christian tradition and theology.

Still, while Fox is culture bound, he strives to hear the voices of the poor and oppressed and to understand how the Spirit speaks through them in unique and powerful ways.¹⁴⁵ While he does focus on actualization, he is also aware of how the Spirit speaks through pain, suffering, abandonment and loss.¹⁴⁶ That Fox does not focus on the

¹⁴⁴ David Lewis, trans., The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross, vol. 1, by St. John of the Cross (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1864).

¹⁴⁵ Fox, Original Blessing, 66-80, 265-76.

¹⁴⁶ Fox, Original Blessing, 129-72.

dark night of the soul, as experienced either by first or third world people, is more a reflection of his passion for original blessing than a lack of awareness that the Spirit speaks in the midst of pain and oppression.

What Fox's spirituality lacks in structure, practicality and universality, it makes up for in joy and hope, and to the tune of these, the Spirit dances best. The dance of the Spirit is also music to the ears of the wounded child. Living out of fear and belief that they do not belong, the wounded child aches to be loved and accepted. For the wounded child lost in the forest of addiction and codependence, Fox's vision of original blessing offers a unique and powerful path to healing.

CHAPTER 6

Dances Of Life: The Four Fold Path and Recovery From
Codependence

This chapter proposes a model which integrates psychotherapeutic techniques and Matthew Fox's four fold path. The purpose of this model is to integrate psychological approaches to the treatment of codependence with spiritual resources based in non-hierarchical visions of the God/Human relationship. The first section of the chapter focuses on critiques of Matthew Fox's creation spirituality as it relates to the healing of codependence. The second section is an overview of the model. The third section examines the spiritual path of the twelve step recovery model in light of the model.

In the story of Tristan and Iseult the love each felt for the other was the only thing that mattered. In the midst of their love, they surrendered everything that mattered to them except each other. They gave up King and country; rank and privilege; security and comfort in order to immerse themselves in their love. In their impassioned effort to fill themselves with one another, they surrendered not only the trappings of their lives, but themselves. Their story is the story of codependence as a personality disorder.

The model I am proposing is a way out of the forest of addiction/codependence. The path I am charting is actually two tracks in the woods which cross each other so frequently they appear to be one. The first path is the transformation of images of God from hierarchical to panentheistic. This path focuses on shifting definitions of spirituality from God as a Higher Power--the only source of meaning and value--to God as the Deep God Within--co-creator with human persons. The second path is the integration of non-hierarchical visions of spirituality with psychotherapy in such a way that the spiritual and therapeutic journeys intertwine. The goal of these intertwining journeys is the healing of the self through the reclamation of personal meaning, value and beliefs in the context of being co-creators with God. Much like the art of M.C. Escher, where foreground and background intermingle to create a coherent whole¹, the spiritual and psychotherapeutic journeys of recovery are paradoxically unique yet all but indistinguishable. Behind this intertwining is a critical intentionality in which the strands of psychotherapy and spirituality are not simply allowed to fall haphazardly into place, but are woven carefully into the fabric of recovery.

If the story of Tristan and Iseult is the story of addiction/codependence, a parable of recovery is:

There once was a little girl(boy) lost in the woods. It was getting dark, and she was very afraid. At first she ran about trying to find the

¹ Douglas R. Hofstadter, Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid (New York: Vintage, 1980).

path she had followed into the woods, but she could not find it. She ran and ran, and looked and looked, but could not find the way that had brought her into the woods. Suddenly she came upon a wide, smooth path. She immediately followed it, but it led nowhere. At first she just sat down and cried when the path led nowhere. Then, after a while, she got up and started looking again. Again she found a wide, smooth path in the woods, and followed it. But, once again, the path led nowhere.

Over and over she found easy, comfortable paths which led nowhere. Exhausted, she sat down after once again following the wide path in the woods. She cried and cried until she fell asleep to the sound of a nearby stream. In the morning she awoke tired and hungry. In her hunger she began to look around her. The first thing she noticed were blackberries growing by the stream. After eating some blackberries she felt better, and began to look closely at the path and forest around her. She noticed that there were many sets of footprints on the path, and they all looked the same. They were hers from treading the same easy path over and over. Realizing this, she began to feel hopeless and utterly lost.

After taking time to wash her face and eat a few more blackberries she felt better. She began to be aware of the forest around her. She saw the trees, felt the earth and listened to the sounds of birds and the stream. Looking at the stream she remembered a stream that ran by her home. She remembered the sounds and the feel of the water. Many memories came back to her. Slowly she began to realize that the stream was a path home. She waded in, and began to go downstream. Somehow, just being in the water made her feel less afraid. Still, it was not easy. Sometimes the water was deep and she had to swim. Other times the stream was full of rocks that had to be climbed over, or gone around. Sometimes she even had to leave the stream and walk in the forest beside the stream for a while. After much swimming, slipping and sliding she noticed that the forest around her was growing lighter, and she gradually left the forest for the openness of fields and meadows.

In therapy, clients learn to remember, feel and share their stories. In spirituality people learn to experience their stories as part of the Great Story. Both are part of the stream of recovery in which the person learns to remember

where they have been, name who they are and playfully/painfully walk into the future.

Original Sin and Healing the Self: Critiques of Matthew Fox's Creation Spirituality

Creation spirituality is a powerful vehicle for the transformation of codependence. Its power rests most clearly in its: (1) affirmation of the goodness of the person, creation and God; (2) understanding the God/human relationship as one of co-creation; (3) understanding salvation as embracing the gift of life/creation/original blessing; (4) reconciling perceived dualisms into a cosmology based on mutuality and dialogue; and (5) accepting the diversity of human experience. Further, the four-fold path of creation spirituality offers a means of integrating spirituality, psychological growth and political action toward a congruent vision of healing and wholeness. Still, in light of my understanding of codependence as a personality disorder reflecting profound damage to the self there are two areas where I must go beyond Fox's vision. The first is original sin. The second is healing the self.

Original Sin

This author believes the point of connection between addiction and theology is the existential issue of escape from freedom² or surrender of the self. In classical existential language, the connection between these two is

² Erich Fromm, Escape from Freedom (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1941).

our flight from authenticity in the moment.³ The theological concept of original sin is a projection of our fear of freedom and authenticity. It is an external, theological manifestation of a personal and corporate flight from responsibility.

This fear is born out of an existential realization that we are free to choose and act. Kierkegaard referred to this experience as

the dizziness of freedom which occurs when . . . freedom . . . gazes down into its own possibility, grasping at finiteness to sustain itself. In this dizziness freedom succumbs . . .⁴

Kierkegaard saw freedom, choice, possibility and the dread they evoke as inviting a demonic shut-inness.⁵ In this state persons feel such fear that they use their freedom to deny their freedom, to deny themselves.

Also out of this fear of freedom and authenticity, Martin Buber observed that our existential trust is shattered.⁶ Existential trust is our willingness to meet and live in the unique present. It is a willingness to let go of preconceived notions and stereotypes in order to be in the present as an authentic person. Such authenticity

³ Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man, ed. and trans. Maurice Friedman (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), 107.

⁴ Soren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1933), 55-56.

⁵ Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, 55.

⁶ Martin Buber, Israel and the World: Essays in a Time of Crisis (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), 17.

evokes a life of dialogue in which persons reject either/or's in order to accept others while at the same time holding their own ground.⁷ This willingness to embrace or meet another while at the same time remaining true to self is the core of Buber's belief that all real living is meeting.⁸ What shatters this sense of meeting, of existential trust, is fear of authenticity; fear of the freedom and responsibility which are necessary to be an I in relationship with a Thou.⁹

Out of these dynamics this author sees Christian doctrines such as original sin and fall/redemption theology originating. Also out of these, this author sees the self-surrender of addiction/codependency as having its source. To authentically claim one's life necessitates being real, being an I in relationship to a Thou, and this is deeply, existentially, frightening. It is far easier to create doctrines of original sin and images of God as the Ultimate Authority and Giver of All Life and Meaning than to grasp our own authentic being and responsibility.

The very act of creating such a doctrine points to our fear of grasping our own responsibility for who we are in the moment, what we have created and what we are creating. Irrespective of the many variations of the doctrine, it is the doctrine itself which is the clearest example of our

⁷ Friedman, To Deny Our Nothingness, 288.

⁸ Friedman, To Deny Our Nothingness, 288-91.

⁹ Friedman, To Deny Our Nothingness, 292-93.

fear of freedom and responsibility. In order to avoid facing our freedom and responsibility, being authentically who we are in the present, we have created an ontological hierarchy in which we are neither deeply free nor responsible for who we are or what we do. Some theological traditions concretize this escape from freedom by declaring that the Devil made me do it.

Intimately related to this vision of creation are understandings of God which place responsibility for life and creation wholly in God's hands. In legalistic visions of Christianity our only responsibility is to adhere to the rules created by God for our salvation. While this does put some degree of freedom and responsibility on us at a behavioral level, such responsibility is set within the greater context of always being able to appeal to God's ultimate grace and forgiveness. It is God who makes the rules and can gracefully ignore them as He deems appropriate.

A powerful tradition in Christianity proclaims salvation by grace through faith. A narrow interpretation of this doctrine results in a belief that we need only surrender ourselves in faith to God to be saved. To be free we need only surrender. More dialogical understandings of grace envision God's love as embedded in creation, and the act of faith as opening to God.

Though an oversimplification, the lived theology of many Christians appears to be an intermixing of visions of

God as external, higher power and intimate creator/sustainer. No matter what the mix, as long as the doctrine of fall/redemption is present, escape from freedom is an underlying dynamic. This is not to say that there is not a deep sense of personal responsibility and freedom in much Christian theology. Human freedom and responsibility, at both individual and corporate levels, have been the subject of theological debate since the beginning of Christianity, and well before that. Much of this discussion focuses on God's gift of freedom to humankind.

One interpretation of this gift of freedom focuses on the person's ultimate freedom and responsibility to be herself or himself. However, this freedom is mediated by the reality that persons exist in history along with other persons and beings who are also free. Thus, our actions are shaped both by personal freedom and the freedom of others, including God. Thus, one's freedom and power are limited, shaped or co-determined by others' freedom. Even though such limits to freedom and power exist, we are still responsible because we are ultimately free. Given this vision, persons seek to escape their freedom and responsibility because, while at the same time they are free, they cannot completely control creation or their own lives.¹⁰

¹⁰ Mary Elizabeth Moore, letter to author, 1 January 1991.

Within this understanding of human freedom and responsibility, original sin reflects the reality of shared freedom. From this perspective, sin is universal, permanent and original.¹¹ Creation itself is shaped by the sin of others, both past and present, in such a way as to be a fundamental element of existence. Further, this fundamental element has been present since the birth of creation. This perspective on original sin does not identify creation as fundamentally bad or fallen.

One way that persons seek to escape freedom and responsibility is through an understanding of original sin which relegates us to a status of radical fallenness. Such radical fallenness, as discussed in Chapter 3, largely removes personal responsibility for sin by defining sin as a fundamental element of creation and humanity. It is not our individual or corporate misuse of freedom that is the source of sin, the source is that we were born into fallen creation. Such a narrow view of original sin helps us escape our freedom and responsibility at corporate and individual levels.

This author's intent is not to reduce the doctrine of original sin to a projection of our escape from freedom. Original sin is a complex and multi-layered set of beliefs and doctrines which cannot be simply dismissed as a way in which human beings avoid freedom and responsibility. As

¹¹ Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith (New York: Seabury, 1976), 37-38.

discussed in Chapter 3, the doctrine of original sin points powerfully to the reality of human sin and the power of God's love. This author's point is that when original sin is set within an ontological hierarchy, it becomes a means of avoiding freedom and responsibility. Further, when set within a hierarchical vision of the God/human relationship, instead of proclaiming a deep truth about human sinfulness, it reinforces our worthlessness and bondage to sin.

Set within the above discussion of human freedom and responsibility, the doctrine of original sin could be understood as pointing to human irresponsibility and escape from freedom within the context of God's gift of unqualified freedom. Further, such a vision of original sin could proclaim our need for God's love, guidance and forgiveness within a panentheistic vision of the God/human relationship. Such a vision of original sin could both acknowledge the depth of human sinfulness and our need for God's grace without resorting to a hierarchical ontology or a vision of radical human sinfulness. This, however, is seldom the case. This dissertation is concerned with the interrelationship between fall/redemption theology, original sin and visions of human worthlessness resulting in addictive behavior. It is not an attempt to discard or oversimplify the doctrine of original sin.

The doctrine of original sin and fall/redemption traditions are intimately related to the dance of death known as the addictive process and codependence. A core

issue in codependence is a sense of personal worthlessness, or shattered sense of self, which feeds deep shame. Out of this sense of worthlessness, persons surrender responsibility for their lives and focuses their energies on other persons, substances and behavior. They escape from freedom. In traditional models of Christianity persons embrace their worthlessness, their original sin or fallenness, and they focus their life energy on obtaining salvation from God. They escape from freedom.

This author agrees with Matthew Fox that creation spirituality traditions hold great promise for enabling persons to embrace their deep oneness with God and creation, and thus their fundamental blessedness. However, even as we embrace our original blessedness we still must face our dread of freedom and authenticity. Even if we rid ourselves of the theological construct of original sin, we have our abiding anxiety to face.

Fox points to, but does not clearly identify, these deep fears. He appears so intent on dealing with doctrines and theological constructs that he fails to grasp the existential issues at hand. Consequently, he does not appear to understand that out of our fear of being who we are, we are capable of using our original blessing as one more way to escape from freedom. The celebration of self and creation can be used just as effectively as original sin as a way of avoiding authenticity. While original blessing does offer a far more positive vision of self, other,

creation and God, it can still be used to escape from freedom. If there is a sin behind all sins, it is not dualism, it is our fear of freedom.

Fox's vision of panentheism and original blessing do provide avenues to grasping our deep freedom and responsibility. If we are co-creators with God dwelling in a creation which affirms and celebrates our goodness, then we are free and responsible and have fewer theological projections to escape within or hide behind. Such a theology and cosmology both acknowledges our freedom and responsibility and embraces the reality and presence of God. Such a theology is also deeply frightening in that we must embrace the truth that we are fundamentally free and responsible. To be co-creators with God is to embrace our freedom and responsibility, and that is the source of our deepest anxiety and fear.

If original sin and codependence/addiction have at their heart a flight from responsibility fueled by deep damage to self, what does it mean to be healed/saved? According to Fox's theology, healing/salvation come through embracing God's grace embedded in creation itself. In Buber's language Fox is describing salvation as entering into an I-Thou relationship with God, creation and neighbor. Yet what is to keep us from running from such radical freedom and responsibility?

We will, to some degree, escape from our freedom. Maintaining an unbroken I-Thou relationship is impossible in

light of our existential distrust and dread. This is an intrinsic element of sin/violence/oppression/separation in the world. This is not to say that our existential distrust and dread are the exclusive source of sin in the world. Individual distrust and dread feed corporate distrust and dread which reaffirms individual distrust and dread. The cycle feeds on itself.

Blackberry bushes grow in such a way that while the plant begins from an original root, every time a branch touches the ground a new root grows. As the plant spreads, not only do its branches form an intertwining labyrinth, so also do its roots. The relationship between individual sin and corporate sin resembles a blackberry bush. While an intrinsic element may be individual anxiety, this root is lost in the labyrinthine roots and brambles of individual and corporate sin, violence, oppression and separation.

Even as co-creators with God who embrace our original blessedness, when we face our freedom and responsibility in light of our human limitations, we feel anxiety and fear. We experience the angst that Kierkegaard emphasized, and the distrust Buber named. Not only do we face it as individuals, but we face it in our relationships with other persons, groups and institutions.

We are all wounded to some degree. While the wound behind all wounds is our anxiety, this anxiety, and the fear it produces, leads to wounded adults who wound each other, individually and corporately, and their children. Thus, the

sins of the parents are visited upon each other and upon their children.

Matthew Fox fails to take seriously enough the truths of our deep anxiety and the fear of freedom it nurtures. His emphasis on embracing our original blessedness offers a needed balance to the focus on human sinfulness. However, in focusing so intently on the doctrine of original sin, he fails to take into account the truths it points to. Further, he does not adequately address the reality of the cycle of existential anxiety nurturing individual and corporate brokenness.

Healing the Self

Healing the self requires more than Fox's largely gestalt focus on the present or humanistic emphasis on the goodness of the person. The wounded child, whether young or old, lives out of an inner sense of fear, guilt and shame. The fear is that someone will find out just how bad he or she really is. Guilt arises out of a sense of always trying to live by the rules when the rules are poorly defined and impossible to live by. And shame comes from a deep belief that one does not deserve to be alive. Out of this sense of fear, guilt and shame, the wounded child escapes into a variety of life denying practices. Whether the behavior is compulsive, addictive or codependent, the underlying dynamic is the same. The wounded child seeks meaning and value outside of oneself and avoids dealing with this or her own life and feelings. While not all codependence dwells in the

realm of addiction, when it does, it indicates deep damage to the self.

The here-and-now focus of gestalt relies on a relatively well developed and integrated sense of self. Further, gestalt therapy requires persons to have fairly well developed verbal and cognitive skills, and to have at least moderate insight into their own functioning. In personality disorders, such resources are seldom available to persons in usable forms.

Another problem with gestalt therapy in terms of the treatment of codependence is that it generally discounts the power of personal insight and cognitive awareness to motivate a person to greater self awareness and change.¹² Matthew Fox accurately identifies insight therapies as dwelling too long in the land of the "whys" of human behavior. He also identifies the temptation in such therapeutic approaches to give therapists great authority in the interpretation of clients' inner world. Still, it is reductionistic to discount the power of the person's inner world, family system and social environment. A balance needs to be struck between the here-and-now concern of gestalt therapy and a focus on depth issues identified by intrapsychic therapeutic approaches. Fox is moving in this direction through his increased awareness of the power of

¹² Howard Clinebell, Contemporary Growth Therapies: Resources for Actualizing Human Wholeness (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 179.

dreams, his exploration of Jung's concept of the Self and references to the wounded child.

While Fox's gestalt, humanistic psychology and systems thinking touches on important issues relative to the healing of the self, he does not pay adequate attention to the power of the past. Healing the self requires a depth awareness identified by writers in the field of addiction and codependence. How this depth awareness is achieved in recovery programs varies greatly. An underlying theme, however, is that to heal a self requires both dealing with present day behavior and the damaged self, the wounded child. Thus, Fox's emphasis on gestalt is largely inadequate to the task of healing a self in that such transformation requires both living in the present and exploring the depths. While such depth psychology is a part of Fox's thought, it is generally overshadowed by his concern for living fully in the present.¹³

¹³ Matthew Fox's emphasis on gestalt oriented psychology needs to be viewed within the context of the population he focuses on. Fox is generally concerned with a population interested in spiritual growth. His books are written to an audience interested far more in self-actualization issues than recovery issues. Broadly put, Fox is dealing with a population that is well educated and emotionally, psychologically and financially stable enough to support an interest in self-actualization. While this is a generalization, it is a context within which Fox's works need to be read. As such, his audience is a group for which gestalt therapy, with its emphasis on self-realization, is appropriate.

The Integration of the Four Fold Path and Recovery from
Codependence: An Overview of the Model

One of the realizations that originally sparked this study was that while many writers in the field of addiction describe addiction as a spiritual issue, little is said about spirituality. This author became aware of this after reading a number of works on codependence and addiction. Many authors started with the affirmation, often in the introduction or first chapters, that addiction is a spiritual issue. The authors then spent the majority of their time talking about addiction in psychological language. Finally, usually toward the end of the work, they returned to the issue of addiction and spirituality.¹⁴ While exceptions to this pattern can be found¹⁵, the pattern does identify a recurring dynamic within the field of addiction treatment.

Writers in the field of addiction talk about addiction as a spiritual issue and then treat it psychologically. Spiritual language, when used, generally identifies addiction as being a fundamental breach of the person's relationship with self, other and God.¹⁶ Little explanation is offered beyond this basic premise, and this is often

¹⁴ For example, see Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking for Co-Dependents, Adult Children and Spirituality Seekers; and Wegscheider-Cruse, The Miracle of Recovery.

¹⁵ See in particular Whitfield, Alcoholism, Attachments and Spirituality; and Fishel, The Journey Within.

¹⁶ Friel and Friel, Adult Children, 185-88.

discussed in terms of damage to self.¹⁷ When spiritual disciplines such as prayer or meditation are referred to, they are poorly developed and are presented more as techniques than disciplines.¹⁸

What this author see demonstrated here is that writers in the field of addiction are trained psychologically, so they speak in psychological language. Still, out of personal experience¹⁹ or awareness of the success of the spiritual focus of twelve step recovery programs²⁰, they are aware of the relationship between spirituality and recovery. What is lacking is a consistent and coherent integration of spirituality and psychological recovery processes.

Further, the spirituality inherent in self-help recovery works based on twelve step models is subtly hierarchical. Though this point will be discussed later in

¹⁷ Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking, 195-203.

¹⁸ For example, see Wegscheider-Cruse, Choicemaking: For Co-Dependents, Adult Children and Spirituality Seekers, 198-99; Fishel, The Journey Within; and Whitfield, Alcoholism, Attachments and Spirituality. Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse simply mentions prayer as an important means to recovery. While Fishel goes to considerable length to present meditation and centering as a means to deal with the stresses of recovery, it is presented as a coping technique rather than a spiritual discipline. The best presentation of the place of spirituality and spiritual disciplines in recovery is done by Charles Whitfield. Whitfield presents prayer and meditation as spiritual disciplines rather than techniques. Further, he integrates the spiritual journey with the journey of recovery in ways that are both flexible and usable. Interestingly, his book Alcoholism, Attachments and Spirituality is distributed by the author, and is not widely known.

¹⁹ Fishel, The Journey Within, 1-17.

²⁰ Carnes, 133-60.

the present chapter, an example of this hierarchical spirituality is the use of the term Higher Power to describe God in the twelve steps. While twelve step recovery programs approach spirituality in such a way as to avoid identification with any specific religious tradition, this author's contention is that referring to God as Higher Power reflects a subtle but pervasive hierarchical ontology.

Matthew Fox is a theologian who is aware that fall/redemption visions of God, self and creation invite and support addictive ways of being. Writers in the field of addiction are psychologically trained, yet sense that addiction is fundamentally a spiritual issue. Both are to some degree limited by their training and the language of their profession. Both seem to understand that the dance of addiction is a dance of death, yet they hear different melodies driving the dance.

The field of addiction offers Matthew Fox the psychological sophistication, in terms of depth therapy, necessary to heal the self. Further, the field of addiction can balance Fox's optimism by grounding it in the daily realities of living with and healing addictions. Matthew Fox offers the field of addiction a spirituality which is accessible, deeply ecumenical, aware of the issue of addiction and concerned with issues of self-surrender. Together, this writer believes they can provide the balance and insight necessary to name the dance of addiction/codependence as the deeply spiritual,

psychological and political dance it is. In short, this author believes a synthesis of these two perspectives offers a path to wholeness and healing at both personal and political levels.

An Integration of Psychotherapeutic and Spiritual
Perspectives in Recovery

It is difficult to summarize treatment procedures in codependence. Few well established or widely accepted treatment procedures exist in the field. However, given the widespread belief that codependence and addiction share similar dynamics, codependence is being treated along the same lines as other addictions. Many inpatient recovery programs attempt to integrate individual and group psychotherapy with twelve step meetings. This therapeutic process seeks to integrate various psychotherapeutic approaches with the spiritual emphasis and group support of twelve step recovery programs. Outpatient treatment also frequently integrates individual or group therapy with participation in twelve step recovery meetings. This author will discuss the place of twelve step meetings in the recovery process later in this chapter.

The present model focuses primarily on outpatient individual and group treatment approaches to codependence. This focus is dictated largely by the economic realities of treatment. Inpatient treatment is far more expensive than individual or group outpatient treatment. Thus, inpatient treatment is accessible to a far smaller number of people

than outpatient treatment. While individual and group psychotherapy is still expensive, it is more accessible than inpatient treatment.

As noted above, there a wide variety of treatment approaches for codependence. What follows is this authors' integration of widely accepted psychotherapeutic insights regarding the treatment of codependence with insights regarding the spirituality of recovery. It is important to view recovery from codependence from both psychotherapeutic and spiritual perspectives in that, as discussed earlier in this chapter, recovery involves both. In short, what follows is one vision of the integration of psychotherapeutic and spiritual aspects of recovery from codependence. The psychological and spiritual journey of recovery from codependence may be summarized as involving the following elements:

Survival -

Clients: In this stage the codependent is living in denial, is focusing his or her life and attention on another person, is actively perpetuating his or her own pain/belief system and is living out of a deep sense of low self-esteem without being aware of doing so. Clients' lack of contact with his or her feelings and sense of self may be conceptualized as being out of touch with her or his inner child. However, her or his feelings of anger and frustration as well as need for intimacy, vulnerability and genuine love frequently express themselves in outbursts of anger, depression or compulsive behavior. Such outbursts also serve to confirm clients' low self-esteem, and reinforce the vicious circle of low self-esteem/denial/anger or depression or compulsivity/denial/low self-esteem.

Therapy: Treatment focuses on helping clients dismantle their denial system, focus attention on self and recognize how they are perpetuating their own pain. Treatment is largely a process of building a relationship with clients, as well as education and confrontation. However, another

key element in therapy is the initial identification of clients' inner child. During this stage of therapy, therapists seek to identify and acknowledge clients' feelings, needs and sense of personal value. This awareness is often fostered by encouraging clients to tell their story. This process of sharing in a nonjudgemental setting, based on the Alanon model, allows clients to begin to identify ways in which they surrender their sense of self, or inner child.

Rediscovering the inner child also begins the journey of re-empowering the person. This process is accomplished in two ways. First, as he or she begins to understand how they came to be in the present situation, she or he feels less overwhelmed by present circumstances. Second, as clients come in more intimate contact with feelings, wants and needs, they begin to access the inner strength necessary to change.

Spirituality: Many codependents in the survival stage do not have an active spiritual life. So much of his or her energy is focused on either another person or coping with pain that little room is left for spirituality. When clients do have a spiritual life, its function is frequently survival oriented. In this stage the codependent sees his or her spirituality as a means of managing pain and pleasing external authority.

Pain-control spirituality is often marked by rigidity and dogmatism mixed with unrealistic expectations. The codependent clings to her or his spiritual tradition, defending it as ultimate truth. Often clients' spirituality is marked by an emphasis on personal piety and a seemingly paradoxical focus on God's love and legalistic expectation.

A second, related, spiritual dynamic present is the need to please God as an external authority in order to earn a sense of personal value. Such a spirituality focuses on identifying what God expects and fulfilling these obligations. Such an emphasis mirrors the codependent's focus on meeting other's expectations rather than dealing with self in relationship. An implicit belief is that if the codependent is good enough, then God will heal the pain and chaos of his or her life.

Emergent Awareness -

Clients: As his or her denial begins to be replaced with a sense of the reality of life, treatment begins to focus increasingly on encouraging and supporting clients to access feelings. This must be done slowly in order not to overwhelm clients with the range and intensity of emotions that have been ignored/repressed. At this point in therapy, clients are beginning to come in contact with their inner child.

Given her or his relative unfamiliarity with feeling feelings or acknowledging and expressing wants and needs,

clients functions much like a two year old child in these areas. One feeling typically accessed during this period of therapy is low self-esteem. As clients begin to take responsibility for her or his life, he or she is faced with acknowledging both the reality and impact of how her or his self concept has shaped much of life.

Therapy: The most frequently used treatment approach is a gestalt focus on present experience and feelings. Clients are generally encouraged to stay in the here and now though he or she is also encouraged to recall incidents related to immediate experience and identify feelings connected with those events. As clients begin to move through immediate experience and claim feelings, therapy increasingly begins to focus on depth or core issues which are seen as the psychodynamic source of current issues.

It is at this point in therapy that the angry child is experienced most intensely. At this stage of therapy, clients often begins to experience intense anger, and are frequently overwhelmed by the depth of his or her anger. Part of this anger is directed at self as clients grow in awareness of how her or his low self-esteem has shaped many life decisions. Put another way, the anger of the inner child is shaped and fueled not only by the injustices done to him or her by others but also the injustices he or she has invited or created. A crucial issue is to continue supporting clients in his or her expression of feelings without overly encouraging acting out feelings.

Clients, acting out of either fight or flight responses, are tempted to either live out her or his anger or escape into denial. In a therapeutic environment, therapists often must set clear boundaries for clients, much like a sponsor in Alanon gives a member working guidelines for how to express feelings in creative and non-destructive ways. At the same time, therapists work with clients to discover how they are mirroring how she or he were taught to deal with feelings as a child.

Spirituality: One dynamic at work in many clients is that as her or his world is challenged by intense feelings accessed in therapy, he or she reacts by maintaining the truth of her or his spirituality. However, as clients continue to access feelings of anger, betrayal and fear, some of this energy is turned on God and/or religious institutions. In a few cases, clients reject spiritual and institutional religious practices. This may reflect clients' choice to flee from a source of conflict and growth. In the majority of cases, clients choose to continue to struggle with spirituality. The intensity of clients struggle with spirituality is shaped by the amount of energy they have invested in spirituality, and the level of anger accessed in recovery. This author's experience is that the majority of clients continue to deal with spiritual

issues. Few actually reject spirituality or spiritual traditions.

The themes of control and pleasing external authority presented in the previous stage of recovery continue to be present in clients spiritual journeys. Added to these is a growing awareness of low self-esteem mixed with a growing sense of personal responsibility. One spiritual task present during this phase of recovery is for clients to begin to reshape images of God and self. One goal of pastoral counseling is to help clients deal with low self-esteem and sense of worthlessness in such ways as to enable him or her to accept and affirm self, and avoid self condemnation.

Self condemnation frequently appears when clients use their awarenesses to self-punish. This sense of personal failure is projected onto God in such a way that clients often believe that God sees and judges them as failures. As clients access present and past feelings and experiences, challenges to spirituality and images of God occur. The overarching spiritual task at this point of recovery is to provide clients with images and resources which can help them evolve spiritually and respond to changing experiences.

Dealing with Core Issues -

Clients: As clients become increasingly aware of feelings and how these have been ignored or repressed, therapy shifts toward dealing with what are referred to as core issues. Core issues typically include control, trust, poor access to feelings, over responsibility, neglect of personal needs, all-or-none-thinking, low self-esteem, high tolerance for inappropriate behavior, and other related behaviors. As clients begin to deal both with inner feelings and experiences and how these are expressed, the inner child is functioning much like a child in the first years of school. Clients are learning how to access feelings while at the same time discovering how to cope both at personal and interpersonal levels.

Therapy: Treatment during this phase of therapy focuses on continuing to access early memories, primarily related to family and significant others, working through the feelings associated with these memories and learning more effective coping skills. Much of this process focuses on grieving the losses of early childhood and identifying how unexpressed, unresolved grief have sabotaged her or his present life. This process typically involves three interrelated therapeutic approaches: (1) insight oriented therapy focused around identification of unresolved developmental issues; (2) identification of family system dynamics which encouraged the formation of core behaviors; and (3) working through feelings and experiences accessed through depth work.

In terms of the inner child, clients are dealing both with experiencing and accepting feelings and learning how to express themselves in creative and acceptable ways. One aspect of therapy is mentoring. As a mentor, therapists rely in insights from Alanon traditions to guide and inform clients. In their role as a mentor, therapists focus less on insight and more on guiding and supporting clients in decision making and determining what are acceptable ways of expressing themselves and shaping their world.

Spirituality: During this stage of spiritual growth, clients increasingly address questions of how to shape the inner life and life in relationship to others. As clients gain new insights into their history and how these events shaped who they have become, they are faced with redefining self and God. A crucial issue continues to be providing clients with a nurturing and supportive environment in which to explore spirituality. Further, supplying clients with spiritual resources appropriate to their needs is crucial.

As clients begin the process of reshaping their sense of self and relationship with God, they are faced with reshaping how they choose to relate to others. Previous to beginning the healing process, clients' fear, denial, need for control and poor ability to touch the inner child limited their ability to relate to others in creative and spontaneous ways. Typically, spirituality and daily life were compartmentalized in such a way as to inhibit spiritual energy and awareness from impacting daily living. A crucial spiritual task during the period of exploring core issues is to begin exploring the bridges between spirituality and daily living. An important concept in the early periods of this exploration is that of acceptance. The issue of linking self acceptance, acceptance of others and God's acceptance is possibly the most important spiritual task addressed during this phase of clients' journeys.

Integration and Transformation -

Clients: As clients continue to work through core issues, they are able to focus on integrating his or her newly discovered, or increasingly healed, inner child into day to day life. The reparenting or cognitive restructuring involved in dealing with core issues moves clients toward new ways of viewing self and world and new ways of being in the world. In terms of the inner child, clients are experiencing the same confidence and desire to grow and explore that an eight to eleven year old child feels. Put another way, clients increasingly practice what they are learning, and experience both the joys of success and fears and pains of failures.

Therapy: The therapeutic process during this stage of recovery focuses on helping clients integrate new found self-esteem in practical, problem solving ways. Therapy

increasingly focuses on education and problem solving in terms of work, family, interpersonal relationships and other settings in which codependent behavior caused difficulty. In broad terms, this phase of recovery focuses on helping clients let go of the past while at the same time learning from it. Treatment modalities typically focus on gestalt techniques, communication skills, boundary drawing, assertiveness training, conflict resolution skills, and other means of focusing on personal care and responsibility.

In terms of the inner child, therapists must both support and affirm the energy and sense of self clients' experience, as well as focus this energy and awareness in ways which serve her or his growth. Much like parenting an eight to eleven year old, therapists celebrate the growing sense of freedom experienced by clients while at the same time addressing issues of responsibility to self, other and creation.

Spirituality: During this phase of recovery, clients are asking the question "How then shall I live?" Put another way, clients are increasingly dealing with broader issues of what it means to live out their spirituality. Previously, clients dealt with such issues in terms of their immediate world and relationships. Increasingly, though, clients begin to explore the implications of their spirituality for the larger world.²¹

What is illustrated above is the intertwining of the psychotherapeutic and spiritual processes of recovery. This author's experience is that only rarely in recovery are spiritual issues not raised by the client. While a client's language may not be overtly spiritual, issues of the relationship between self, other and Ultimacy are present. There are many implications of this intertwining of psychotherapy and spirituality. At present, this author is exploring the relationship between recovery and the four fold path.

²¹ This presentation of the treatment of codependence contains elements drawn from Whitfield, Healing The Child Within; and Weiss and Weiss, Recovery From Co-Dependence.

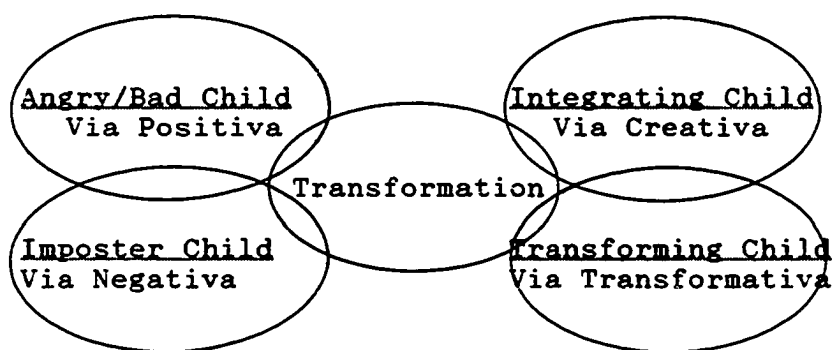
The purpose of this work is to provide the four fold path as a resource for addressing spiritual issues in recovery. This author is not proposing the four fold path in and of itself as a means of recovery from codependence/addiction. Neither is this author proposing that the four fold path be the only spiritual context through which recovery from codependence/addiction be viewed. Spiritual and psychological issues are intertwined in recovery, and both resources are needed to foster recovery. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, many resources which address recovery fail to explore the spiritual dynamics. Further, the hierarchical ontology inherent in some expressions of spirituality envision the spiritual journey in such a way as to subtly reinforce addictive ways of being. Therefore, this author is offering the four fold path as a resource for recovery which not only addresses spiritual issues throughout the course of recovery but does so in a way which invites both therapist and client to envision the relationship between self, other and God in non-hierarchical, celebrative ways.

The Four Fold Path and the Treatment of Codependence

The purpose of this section is to present the four fold path as a resource for recovery from codependency. As discussed in Chapter 3, codependence is both a specific addiction to relationship and an underlying dynamic in all addictions. This discussion will be limited to exploring

the implications of the four fold path for recovery from codependency as an addiction to relationships.

In the preceding section, a therapeutic process, or journey, of recovery was presented. While this presentation was in linear form, a more accurate vision of the journey of transformation from the perspective of the four fold path resembles a set of interconnected and overlapping circles. One visual representation of this process is as follows.



An important dynamic illustrated in this diagram is that the steps are not discreet and separate, but, rather, overlap and interrelate. Primarily, the via positiva and via negativa interconnect and the via creativa and via transformativa impact each other. Persons claiming their inner goodness, at the same time begin to embrace their woundedness and grief. In the same manner, persons embracing their creativity also begin to explore what it means to change the world. This process of recovery is discussed below. In Chapter 7, case material from this author's work with codependents will be presented to illustrate the use of the four fold path.

The Via Positiva and Survival/Emergent Awareness

The via positiva focuses on celebrating the self in relationship with creation and God in such a way that we begin to embrace our original blessing. A key goal of the via positiva is the reconceptualization of our image of self as fallen, to the image of self as blessed. Thus, the via positiva focuses on shifting persons' image of themselves from being radically fallen to being radically good.

The beginning of the journey of transformation focuses on challenging the wall of denial which surrounds persons, and on supporting and affirming them. A key goal of therapy is challenging codependents core belief system and offering new and positive options. Put another way, codependents live out of the belief that they are bad and undeserving of life and love. The spiritual/psychotherapeutic tasks are: to challenge persons' denial that they are surrendering their lives to another person, to affirm the worth of persons, and to offer alternative core beliefs which affirm rather than negate personhood.

Persons begin the path of transformation living out of a sense of deep fear and denial. The inner or wounded child in this stage of recovery might more accurately be called the angry/bad child.²² Persons are frequently experiencing

²² The use of the phrase inner child, or the variations used in this study, does not refer to the whole person. Persons are more than an inner child. This construct refers to relational skills learned in childhood, images of self and how persons relate to primary emotions such as anger, sadness, fear and happiness. One way to understand this image is in terms of cognitive maps, as discussed in Chapter

great anger toward self and others, while at the same time experiencing self as deeply bad. The core belief of persons facing their angry/bad child is that they are fundamentally bad. They do not deserve to be alive or to be loved.

The spiritual resources most suited to this portion of the journey focus on quiet meditation, active imagination and art as meditation.²³ These three meditation forms serve different, though overlapping, purposes. The purpose of quiet meditation, or contemplation, is to quiet the person's mind and foster a sense of inner self or balance.²³ The purpose of active imagination, or opening meditation, is to focus the self on images, actions, thoughts or feelings which lead the person to a more intense or immediate awareness of self. The purpose of art as meditation is to translate these predominantly, though not exclusively, inner processes into action. Thus, the person takes the heightened sense of self gained through contemplation and active imagination and applies the new awareness to activities ranging from washing the dishes to painting a picture to raising a child.

To be most effective, these resources need to be taught and practiced within the therapy session and then practiced

3. As persons challenge ways of relating to self, other and God, they redraw their cognitive maps. Put another way, the process of healing codependence involves becoming aware of cognitive maps persons drew as children, challenging errors in the maps and redrawing the maps to integrate more accurate, or liberative, information.

²³ Claudio Naranjo and Robert E. Ornstein, *On The Psychology of Meditation* (New York: Viking, 1971).

on a daily basis. Within the therapy/spiritual direction setting, persons' experiencing their angry/bad child can be invited through contemplative and active imagination to feel the full range of their feelings and to express their goodness, beauty and worth as persons. Such practices, along with the deep breathing and centering which prepares persons for meditation, serve to center persons in their own feelings and experienced world. Such an affirmation of the persons' feelings and experiences not only reinforces their search for personal meaning, but also helps them detach from their drug of choice.

The use of meditative practices in daily living serves not only to reinforce their effectiveness but also to alter persons daily routines. If, as with many codependents, great energy is focused on caretaking, such shifts require persons to spend more time on self-care and self awareness. The effect of taking time for self is both to interrupt the persons' system and introduce elements of centering, self care and self awareness.

Perhaps the most basic technique for helping persons to focus on their lives is encouraging them to set aside personal time every morning and evening. Initially, this time is best used to walk or simply sit quietly and listen. The purpose of such practices is both to enable persons to focus on their own experiences and feelings, and also to affirm self-care as both important and crucial to recovery.

Such quiet times can also be used to practice meditative techniques taught in therapy sessions.

Perhaps the most powerful force at this point of the spiritual journey is the person of the therapist/spiritual director. This is not meant to indicate that the therapist/spiritual director need sell his or her particular spirituality or set of spiritual techniques. Instead, the task of the therapist/spiritual director is to invite persons into a new way of viewing themselves, their world and spirituality. Of utmost importance is that the therapist/spiritual director affirm, support and celebrate the inner goodness of persons, and offer meditative techniques as a means of healing, celebration and affirmation. Similarly, it is crucial that the therapist/spiritual director be flexible in her or his approach in order to offer spiritual resources which address the needs of persons.

One process which is useful during this phase of spiritual growth involves a process similar to self-identification as proposed by Roberto Assagioli.²⁴ Self-identification enables persons to move toward identifying and naming their own, unique self. Since this process is lengthy and difficult, it is important to avoid moving too quickly or overwhelming the person with abstract, mystical language about self. Given the poor sense of self

²⁴ Roberto Assagioli, *Psychosynthesis* (New York: Viking, 1965), 116-22.

frequently experienced by codependents, instead of moving toward an awareness of self as a center of consciousness and power, as suggested by Assagioli²⁵, it is preferable to focus on affirmations of self such as:

I am my body....but I am more.
 I am my feelings....but I am more.
 I am my mother's child....but I am more.
 I am my father's child....but I am more.
 I am my husband's (wife's) spouse...but I am more.
 I am my pain....but I am more.
 I am my joy....but I am more.
 I am my sadness....but I am more.
 I am me....and that is good.
 I am me....and that is enough.
 I am loved....and that is the deepest truth.²⁶

As used by this author, the purpose of such a process of affirmation and self-identification is to continue to affirm the goodness of the person while at the same time beginning to disidentify them from the external sources of identity which are often seen as the definition of their being. This process of affirmation in the midst of disidentification and identification also serves subtly to challenge the persons' denial of their feelings and experiences.

The above affirmations focus both on affirming the person and differentiating self from external definitions. In order to focus a person's awareness of self, that which is beyond body, feelings, or social roles, the following guided meditation is useful.

²⁵ Assagioli, Psychosynthesis, 119.

²⁶ This meditation is based loosely on ideas presented in Assagioli, Psychosynthesis, 116-20. The content of the meditation is this author's creation.

After deep breathing and relaxation imagine that you are taking an internal tour of your body. It is dark inside, but there is a dim light. Begin to look for the light. Begin by exploring your head and neck, and then move too your shoulders. Explore the inside of both your arms all the way to your finger tips. Now move down and explore the darkness inside each of your legs, feet and toes. Be aware of the darkness inside you, and the ever present dim light. Now move back toward your center; back toward your chest and stomach. Imagine buried deep within you a small spark (crystal, flame, light). In your imagination move around it. Look at it. Feel its light and warmth. It may be dim, but still it puts out a clear light and comforting warmth. Cup it in your hands. Feel its warmth and watch its light flow around your fingers. As you hold it will it, invite it to grow. Now watch it grow. Follow the light and warmth as they fill every part of your body. Feel yourself grow warm and full of light. Know that your inner light and warmth is always there. All you need do is be aware of the light and warmth that is you, and call it forth to fill you.

A central purpose of such a meditation/guided image is to provide the person with a positive visual image of the self.

Each of the above techniques can be taught in therapeutic environments, and then practiced daily. However, perhaps the simplest and most effective centering technique is to invite persons to take time every day, preferably morning and evening, to walk or sit quietly. The content or focus of such times can be shaped according to the needs of the client. Frequently a crucial issue needing to be addressed is awareness of self and creation. Often, codependents are so cut off from their feelings and bodies that simple instructions to be aware of their bodies, feelings and environment are challenging. One way to address this isolation and denial of self is as follows.

Take time to walk every day. As you get ready for your walk close your eyes, take some deep breaths and clear your head. As you start to walk you don't need to solve or think about anything. All you need to do is to be aware of how you are feeling and the world around you. Look around you. Notice what the ground, sky, trees, houses, yards, cars and so on look like as you walk by. Notice how you feel when you look and see what is around you. Notice how you feel as you walk away from where you live, and how you feel when you begin to approach home again. Be aware. When you get home, take time to write down your experiences. Focus on your feelings.

Such a centering process is a non-threatening way of inviting persons to gently touch their feelings and experiences. Further, discussion of such material can provide an introit for discussing issues such as denial, feelings about self care and feelings about leaving and returning home.

Again, it is crucial to remember that the above meditative techniques are not intended to be used as a substitute for therapy. Rather, these resources are to be used in conjunction with various forms of therapy as a means of addressing both spiritual and emotional issues. Embedded in these meditative techniques is the belief that it is crucial for persons to embrace, affirm and celebrate their fundamental goodness and uniqueness in a way which invites both therapist and client to envision spirituality in non-hierarchical ways. Another theme embedded in this approach and these resources is that spirituality is an inherent and essential element of the journey of transformation. As

such, spiritual issues and awareness must be addressed throughout the therapeutic journey.

The Via Negativa and Dealing With Core Issues via negativa

The via negativa invites persons to confront their deep brokenness and the worlds deep brokenness. The via negativa focuses on the process of letting go, letting be, and letting dialectic happen.²⁷ Put another way, the via negativa focuses on helping persons let go of the illusion that they can somehow control or make logical sense of creation.

The first step of the interior journey of the via negativa is to name our fears. This involves allowing ourselves to sink into who we are and what we feel. Only when we allow ourselves to experience self and feelings can we begin the process of letting go. Letting go involves both giving up of one's heavy investment in the material world and relaxing rigid interior self-definitions which limit who we see ourselves to be and who we want to become.

Put another way, the first step of the via negativa is letting go of self- and other-imposed shoulds. The goal of this phase of the via negativa is coming to a place where persons realize that they "have nothing to lose."²⁸ This is not a process of asceticism. It is a process of letting go,

²⁷ Fox, A Spirituality Named Compassion and the Healing of the Global Village, Humpty Dumpty and Us, 151.

²⁸ Fox, Original Blessing, 151.

of emotional and psychological surrender. Put another way, letting go is coming to realize how much our things own us.

The emotional and spiritual outcome of this process is growing acceptance of who we are and of the world as it is. Letting be is the process of acceptance. Finally, letting dialectic happen is the shift from trying to be in control and make logical sense of creation, to relating to the world in a participatory manner. Instead of trying to control the world or see it through self-centered eyes, persons come to the realization that they are one voice among many. The way through this process is to: (1) feel one's pain and the pain of the world; (2) journey with the pain instead of trying to avoid, deny or repress it, and; (3) learn from the pain and let it go.

In psychotherapeutic language, dealing with core issues involves persons increasingly in facing the wounded child within. Perhaps a better description of the wounded child during this phase of recovery is the imposter child. During this phase of recovery, persons become increasingly aware of how many feelings and experiences they have been denying or ignoring and how much they have shaped their lives in order to please another.

Instead of focusing on another person, persons begin to face their own ingenuiness, feel their own feelings and experience their own life and woundedness. This experience typically centers on accessing feelings, naming dysfunctional ways of relating--such as control, low levels

of trust and over responsibility--and making connections between feelings and behavior and early experiences/memories.

The therapeutic task during this part of recovery is to help persons feel their feelings and remember. Further, therapy during this stage of recovery focuses on helping persons work through their losses as a child and adult. The therapist not only focuses on helping clients name and experience their feelings and the family dynamics which were their source but also helping clients grieve their losses.

Issues of control generally begin to emerge during this period. As clients begin to name their core beliefs, they increasingly realize that their interpersonal styles of relating focus on controlling self and others. For a more complete discussion of this point see Chapters 2 and 3.

The spiritual process and resources most suitable to this part of the journey build on those begun in the via positiva. While persons focus on defining and affirming the self in the via positiva, the via negativa focuses on exploring how pain, fear and ingenuiness have become a central part of life. In addition to the spiritual resources used in the via positiva, focusing on subpersonalities²⁹ or dealing with voices from the past³⁰

²⁹ James G. Varigu, "Subpersonalities," Synthesis 1, no. 1 (1974): 9-47.

³⁰ By voices of the past I am referring to persons, experiences and memories, frequently from early childhood, which shape present behavior and perceptions.

enables persons increasingly to identify and feel their own pain, the pain of others and the presence of God in the midst of pain. Put another way, damage to self results in a poor sense of individuation which results in persons defining themselves according to the needs of others; whether these others are in the present or in the past. Codependents often confuse their own pain with the pain of others. In systems language, codependents frequently have poor emotional boundaries. In terms of spirituality, this is the process of learning how and where to look for deep meaning in the midst of the pain of life.

One exercise which invites persons to look at where they have been genuine and where they have not is as follows:

Close your eyes. Breathe deeply. Relax. Look at the past day (morning, afternoon, evening or hour) and let the events of that time play across your imagination like a movie. As you play the movie feel the wide range of feelings evoked by the images. Ask yourself, Where was I real? and Where was I ingenuine? Pretend to be a gentle movie critic. As a gentle critic, ask yourself whose direction you followed through the day? Were the directions from family, boss, children or deep within you? Don't be critical of yourself. Simply observe and point out where you followed your deep direction and where you did not. Now, image the day over again. Where you felt you followed directors other than your deep self, image what it would be like to re-shoot those scenes. When you are through, take time to write down notes for the next day's movie. What scenes do you anticipate being difficult? What will it take to live out those scenes according to your inner spirit?³¹

³¹ Parts of this meditation were adapted from: Steven Kull, "The Evening Review," Synthesis 1, no. 1 (1974): 60-61.

This meditation provides a safe place to explore where persons surrender the self, and also to link surrender of self with difficulties of coming in contact with God.

The following exercise illustrates the process of dialoguing with the voices which fill our lives. The purpose of this meditation is to invite persons, first, to name the many voices which fill their lives and, second, to dialogue with these voices. Persons need to be taught about subpersonalities or voices from the past before the exercise is done. It is particularly important that they begin to identify people in their lives, past and present, who either have or continue to impact their lives. Also, persons can be invited to imagine what the voice of God sounds like, or what form this takes, in their own lives. In light of the via negativa and the journey of recovery, the voices met in dialogue will often be voices of pain, confusion and darkness. Thus, this process needs to be repeated as persons face and embrace their darkness and pain.

Get comfortable. Relax. Breathe deeply. Now imagine that you are in a very familiar place. That place could be your home, where you work or any place that you feel safe and known. Now imagine leaving that place and walking outside. The further you walk the more unfamiliar the scenery becomes. Now you are in a new place. It's not frightening. It's just new. Now the landscape around you opens up into broad fields, and ahead you can see a bridge over a deep gorge. Walk to the bridge. Stand there and look across. Imagine that it's difficult to see what's on the other side. It seems a bit dim. A bit foggy. Feel yourself strain to see clearly. Now begin walking across the bridge. Feel yourself going into a dim place. As you cross the bridge it becomes dimmer and foggier, but not frightening. Now you are across the bridge, and everything is just a bit

dim. You can see, but everything is indistinct. Walk a bit. Look around you at the soft shapes and listen to the muffled sounds in the fog. Now . . . image that you come to a door. You can see it clearly even if everything around it is dim. Look at the door. Notice what the door is made of. What kind of knob and hinges it has. Now open the door, and listen. What voices do you hear? What voice do you want to talk to right now? What voice is calling the loudest? Which voice are you afraid of? Choose a voice which evokes pain or fear, and invite the voice to come out and talk with you. Now watch as the fear or pain emerges as a person or shape. What does it look like? What does it feel like to be near that memory or pain? Take some time to talk to it. Listen to what it has to say. Ask what it wants from you. Then ask why. Now ask what the voice needs, and why. Now, if you feel comfortable, become that voice. Become that fear or pain. Feel the pain; the fear; the memory. Now be yourself once again. Feel what it is like to feel your own pain and fear. When you are through, thank the person, the voice, and watch them go behind the door again. Shut the door, and return on the path back home.³²

The via negativa focuses on embracing pain and ingenueness instead of labeling them as evil, ignoring them or attempting to heal them quickly in order to get on with living.

One of the most powerful images which this author has used, as illustrated in the case material below, is related to embracing and letting go of pain; it involves grasping and letting go of the cactus.

Relax. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Allow yourself to sink deeply into yourself. Imagine that you are a gardener. You work with plants. You care for them. You water them, pick weeds and make sure they have plenty of light. Today, you are going to pot a cactus. It is a large cactus, with long, sharp thorns. You will have to dig it

³² Parts of this meditation were adapted from Betsie Carter, "The Door," Synthesis 1, no. 1 (1974): 50-53.

out of the ground and put it in a pot. Imagine loosening the ground around the cactus, and trying to avoid the thorns. Feel the thorns prick your bare hands. Look at the scratches and cuts left by the cactus. Feel the pain.

Now it is time to try and lift the cactus out of the ground. Grasp the cactus gently, and pull. Feel it resist. Grasp the cactus harder, and feel the thorns push into your bare hands. Feel how much it hurts. Let it go now, and look at the wounds on your hands. Look at the cactus with its long, sharp thorns.

Take your time now, and in your imagination decide what to do next. You can do whatever you wish. You can leave the cactus where it is. You can wrestle with it more. You can get tools or friends to help you in any way you want. What you do with the cactus is your choice.

The cactus is a metaphor for strongly held patterns that cause pain and confusion. Grasping and letting go of the cactus is a way of getting in touch with the pain and exploring how clients choose to deal with the pain. It is an open ended meditation which invites exploration of what persons choose to do with the cactus, and how this applies to their lives.

One disadvantage of this metaphor is its highly individual nature. Some of the cacti in persons lives may be stuck firmly in the ground, but others are thrust upon them by culture and environment. Codependence may be viewed as an amplification of culturally reinforced stereotypical roles of women as caretakers. Likewise, codependence can also be an amplification of culturally reinforced, stereotypical roles of men as producers who have to gain value through achievement and satisfying external authority. The issue of spiritual direction as consciousness raising

must not be ignored in any portion of a persons spiritual/therapeutic journey.

The Via Creativa and Integration

The via creativa is the way of creativity. Learning to name our feelings, let go and accept self, others and creation results in the energy and courage to change and create. The difference between the via positiva and the via creativa is the difference between intellectual awareness and acting upon that awareness. Put another way, the difference between these two is the difference between inspiration and bringing inspiration to life. The via creativa focuses on learning how to bring the energy, creativity and sense of self-worth of the person to life through the art of living. The medium this art of living takes is less important than the intent or experience of creating. The via creativa may be followed through housework, writing, parenting, friendships, intimate relationships, gardening or spiritual disciplines such as prayer or meditation. The key is that persons experience themselves as expressing their personal creativity and self-expression. Thus, however persons express themselves, they need to find an avenue of deep self expression.

During this phase of the journey of transformation, the wounded child is becoming the transforming child. While persons continue to work through their feelings and experiences, they increasingly focus on integrating their new awarenesses into daily life. Where previously their

fear and sense of worthlessness resulted in ways of living that were grounded in control and lack of trust, persons increasingly become comfortable dealing with their feelings and experiences and accepting others where they are. Put another way, persons are in the midst of letting go of the shoulds that have ruled their life, and replacing them with self-aware life choices.

The most frequently experience challenge during this phase of recovery is a sense of being overwhelmed. As persons open themselves to new possibilities and ways of relating, previously unknown options become available. Persons become increasingly aware that they can choose to be in relationship or not. They also realize that they can choose how they relate to others and themselves and are not limited to options formed within their original family system. In the midst of this myriad of decisions, persons may find themselves slipping back into old, seemingly safe, ways of relating.

The therapeutic task during this phase of transformation centers on helping persons to feel and to remember and to integrate their new feelings, experiences and learnings into their daily life. In particular, therapy focuses on strengthening self-esteem and practicing newly discovered ways of relating and problem solving. The therapist must be particularly aware of clients tendencies to return to previously effective ways of relating during

stressful periods. The process of grief begun earlier in therapy will also continue.

The spiritual resources most expressive of the via creativa are as varied as the persons experiencing the four fold path. Given the changes taking place in persons lives during recovery, the spiritual resources relied upon during this phase need to be as concrete and tactile as possible. While guiding persons along the creative way in terms of raising children or work outside the home is possible , such integrative spirituality is challenging. Thus, beginning the creative process with an art form or craft which is appealing and not necessarily a part of daily life is preferable. Pottery, photography, gentle physical exercise, flower arranging, potting plants, gardening, walking and other such mediums of expression invite persons into creativity without being production oriented.³³ The central purpose is to support and encourage persons to express their growing sense of centeredness or creativity in visible ways. The key to this step in the four fold path is praxis growing out of a renewed sense of self worth, original blessing, balanced with a deep awareness of personal and corporate brokenness.

As noted previously in this chapter, the attitude and spirit of the therapist/spiritual director is a crucial element in this phase of the four fold path. The

³³ Perhaps the single best resource on what it means to use creativity as a means of centering and celebrating is Richards, Centering in Pottery, Poetry, and the Person.

therapist/spiritual director needs to present this aspect of spiritual/therapeutic growth in terms of a positive celebration of persons' inner transformation and integration. Without this context, the activities persons choose can be shaped by perfectionism and pleasing external authority rather than celebration.

The Via Transformativa and Spiritual/Emotional/Cultural Transformation

The via transformativa is shaped by a biblical understanding of the prophetic as proclaiming God's desire to embrace and transform the world. It is shaped by the vision that as persons grow in compassion for themselves and the world, they are led back to seek ways to transform the world. Matthew Fox sees the spiritual journey both culminating in this prophetic compassion and being undergirded by it.³⁴ The goal of spirituality, as Fox sees it, is lived compassion.³⁵ As we are healed, we seek to heal others.

During this phase of therapy the compassionate child begins to appear. As persons self-esteem increases, they begin sharing their newly found sense of self and exploring spirituality. One challenge during this stage of recovery has to do with avoiding control and authority issues which arise as persons begin to reach out to others. A second, related challenge is continuing with personal growth and

³⁴ Fox, Whee! We, Wee All The Way Home, 117.

³⁵ Fox, A Spirituality Named Compassion, 23.

discipline, even though persons see themselves as having achieved relative comfort and serenity. Persons often contemplate leaving therapy or whatever recovery group they are involved in during, or just previous to, this stage.

Therapy at this stage of recovery focuses primarily on continuing the process of translating persons self-esteem into creative living practices such as assertion and communication skills. Related to this process, clients need to continue to be aware of control issues which frequently appear as they mentor other recovering persons.

Spirituality may or may not be overtly dealt with in the therapy setting. This is determined largely by the focus of the therapist or group. If spirituality is a part of the recovery process, the focus of this part of therapy tends to be on how to translate serenity into daily life. Thus, while the recovering person's spirituality has previously focused on more personal, interior spiritual growth or creativity, at this stage of recovery the focus is on action whose purpose is to shape creation. Spirituality and mentoring intertwine here; as in twelve step recovery programs, mentoring others in recovery is seen as helping the person put their spirituality into action to change the world. This is not meant to indicate that mentoring begins during this phase of spiritual growth. Telling one's story is an important aspect of healing and exploring spirituality throughout the process of transformation. Sharing experiences with others is important in that through sharing

and being vulnerable with another, persons become increasingly self-aware.

Nor is this meant to indicate that mentoring is the only setting in which active spirituality is encouraged. Throughout recovery, persons are encouraged to translate their growing serenity into action in their home, work and public lives. Issues of living out persons' spirituality are embedded throughout the four fold path. Spirituality is not seen as a disembodied experience. From the perspective of the four fold path, spirituality focuses on acknowledging and celebrating God's presence in the totality of life. What is focused on during this phase of spiritual transformation is spirituality as social awareness/praxis.

A wide variety of spiritual disciplines or processes are applicable to this phase of recovery/spiritual growth. Many of the issues surrounding spirituality and social action are addressed by Harvey Seifert in Explorations in Meditation and Contemplation³⁶, and by Harvey Seifert and Lois Seifert in Liberation of Life.³⁷ A consistent focus of both of these works is that spirituality as social action needs to begin with awareness of what is important to the person. What social, ethical, environmental and political issues touch the person deeply? Through contemplation on the many issues of life, persons begin to sense what issues

³⁶ Harvey Seifert, Explorations in Meditation and Contemplation (Nashville: Upper Room, 1981).

³⁷ Harvey Seifert and Lois Seifert, Liberation of Life (Nashville: Upper Room, 1976).

and causes are of personal importance. When these issues have been defined, persons can then begin to explore how they can alter their daily lives in response to these issues. For example, if persons sense that ecology is a crucial issue to them, then they can begin to explore what it means to live in a deeply spiritual relationship with creation. Person can begin to act on their belief by recycling, shopping in an intentional manner, changing spending habits, making economic contributions to selected organizations and becoming personally involved in political activities aimed at healing the environment. However, each of these actions must be intentionally integrated with personal spirituality in order to be more than simply a social or economic action. Such intentionality is the bridge between social action and the prophetic. In terms of recovery, such intentionality is also a way in which persons intentionally transcend their relatively narrow sense of self in order to heal, mentor, touch, change and transform. Put another way, the via transformativa is living out the compassion persons feel for themselves, others and creation.

The Four Fold Path as Ten

Steps To Transformation

Another way of conceptualizing the four fold path as a means of recovery from codependence is to envision it as a series of steps. The advantage of summarizing the four fold path into steps is that it provides a succinct summary of the four fold path as it relates to healing codependence.

Put another way, envisioning the four fold path as a series of steps is one way to concretize the process of spiritual development relative to recovery from codependence. This process was summarized on pages 322-329.

The disadvantage of summarizing the four fold path as a series of steps is that it suggests that the process of recovery, spiritual growth is linear. Instead of envisioning the ten steps, discussed below, as a ladder ascended rung by rung, a more accurate image is a dance. Each step is a part of the dance of recovery, but is danced in whatever order or pattern suits the dancer. The ten steps of the four fold path are:

THE TEN STEPS

1. I have a problem with relationships that once had me.³⁸

2. I am accepted, embraced and blessed, and I choose to change.

3. Knowing I am accepted, embraced and blessed, I name and feel my pain.

4. Knowing I am accepted, embraced, and blessed, I name the pain of others and of creation.

5. Where I have been a part of the pain of others and creation, I seek healing and reconciliation which affirms myself and others.

6. As I embrace pain and blessing, I embrace my passion for living in the present.

THE FOUR FOLD PATH

VIA POSITIVA

VIA POSITIVA

VIA NEGATIVA

VIA NEGATIVA

VIA NEGATIVA/
VIA CREATIVA

VIA NEGATIVA/
VIA CREATIVA

³⁸ The first portion of this step is found in Jean Kirkpatrick, Turnabout: New Help for the Woman Alcoholic (New York: Bantam, 1990), 161.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 7. My passion is my creativity and my creativity is my passion. | VIA CREATIVA |
| 8. My passion invites and evokes powerful compassion. | VIA CREATIVA/
VIA TRANSFORMATIVA |
| 9. My passionate compassion invites me to be fully who I am. | VIA CREATIVA/
VIA TRANSFORMATIVA |
| 10. As I express my compassion through justice I continue to grow and heal. | VIA TRANSFORMATIVA |

The ten steps are the creation of this author. The intent of offering the four fold path in this manner is to provide a structure, similar to that of the twelve steps, which is readily understandable and usable. More importantly, this author believes that the four fold path speaks to recovery issues not addressed by the twelve steps. This will be the subject of the next section.

The Four Fold Path and the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

It is beyond the scope of this work to address how the four fold path can be a means of healing for all addictions. The focus of this discussion is how the four fold path addresses the needs of persons with addictions to relationship. However, given the success of the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous with a wide variety of addictions, some discussion of the four fold path and the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous is called for. This author's intention is not to present a thorough critique the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Instead, the intent of this discussion is to present the four fold path as a new

paradigm of recovery. It is not this author's intention to suggest the four fold path is in any way superior or more effective than the twelve steps. Rather, it is this author's intention to present the four fold path as a model of recovery which addresses the needs of certain persons in unique ways.

God and Surrender in the Twelve Steps

One of the fundamental affirmations of twelve step recovery programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon and Codependents Anonymous, is that surrender to a Higher Power out of a sense of powerlessness is a fundamental step in recovery.³⁹ The first three steps in the twelve step process embody this process of surrender: (1) we admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable; (2) came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity; and (3) made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.⁴⁰ While these steps refer to alcohol, the twelve steps themselves have been applied to a variety of recovery issues. Such self-surrender is the first step toward letting go of persons' beliefs that they are the center of the universe, and can be in control not only of their lives but of creation.⁴¹ Built into these

³⁹ Alcoholics Anonymous, 13, 58-88.

⁴⁰ Alcoholics Anonymous, 13

⁴¹ Whitfield, Alcoholism, Attachments and Spirituality, 52-54.

steps is the belief that the nature of one's higher power is largely irrelevant, so long as the Higher Power embodies a spiritual process. One's Higher Power can be the Judeo-Christian God, Buddha, the group, or a lightbulb.⁴²

Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another's conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps. We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly see. It is open, we believe, to all men.⁴³

While this statement is written from the perspective of persons who have integrated a distinctly spiritual understanding of God or Higher Power, no admonition is made in the twelve steps that one's Higher Power needs be a traditional image of God. The Higher Power needs only to represent something or someone greater than the person. The goal of such self-surrender is a spiritual experience in which the person's experience of life is profoundly changed.⁴⁴ What is surrendered to is far less important than the process of surrendering.⁴⁵

⁴² Whitfield, Alcoholism, Attachments and Spirituality, 19.

⁴³ Alcoholics Anonymous, 46.

⁴⁴ Alcoholics Anonymous, 569-70.

⁴⁵ Alcoholics Anonymous, 44-57.

Though surrender includes a wide variety of dynamics, the essential element is acceptance.

It is to be viewed as a moment when the unconscious forces of defiance and grandiosity actually cease effectively to function. When that happens, the individual is wide open to reality; he can listen and learn without conflict and fighting back. He is receptive to life, not antagonistic. He sense a feeling of relatedness and at-oneness which becomes the source of an inner peace and serenity, the possession of which frees the individual from the compulsion to drink. In other words, an act of surrender is an occasion wherein the individual no longer fights life, but accepts it.⁴⁶

This understanding of surrender reflects Harry A. Tiebout's observations of the grandiosity and defiance exhibited by alcoholics.⁴⁷ Surrender is the process wherein alcoholics' will to power, which fuels grandiosity and defiance, is transformed into acceptance. It bears noting that Tiebout's understanding of surrender and recovery were gained in clinical observation of alcoholics, in study of the twelve step process and in conversations with persons such as Bill Wilson, cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous.⁴⁸

Surrender is a fundamental realization that persons cannot control creation through acts of will. This coming to awareness may be instantaneous, but more often it occurs

⁴⁶ Harry A. Tiebout, The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process (New York: National Council on Alcoholism, n.d.), 2.

⁴⁷ Tiebout, The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process, 3, 6.

⁴⁸ Robert H., Albers, The Theological and Psychological Dynamics of Transformation in the Recovery from the Disease of Alcoholism, Ph.D. Diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1982 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1982), p. 91.

over time.⁴⁹ Tiebout refers to this process of coming to awareness as a conversion.

Conflict, tension, doubt, anxiety, hostility, all dissolve as though they were nothing and the individual discovers himself on an exalted plane where he feels he is in communion with God, man, and all the creative forces of the universe.⁵⁰

Tiebout's vision of conversion is similar to Robert Albers' understanding of conversion as "a radical reversal in lifestyle."⁵¹ Albers views alcoholism as "a basic dis-ease with life, a desire to be set apart and so gain an identity of distinction and uniqueness as a person."⁵² Only as persons surrender this all-consuming desire to be special, set apart, is conversion/acceptance possible.

Both Albers and Tiebout make clear distinctions between surrender and submission. According to Albers, "There is a significant and substantial difference between submission and surrender, as a matter of fact, they should be seen as opposites."⁵³ Tiebout's vision of the difference between surrender and submission is that

In submission, an individual accepts reality consciously but not unconsciously. He accepts as a practical fact that he cannot at that moment lick reality, but lurking in his unconscious is

⁴⁹ Harry A. Tiebout, Conversion as a Psychological Phenomenon (New York: National Council on Alcoholism, 1944), 4.

⁵⁰ Tiebout, Conversion as a Psychological Phenomenon, 4.

⁵¹ Albers, 101.

⁵² Albers, 101.

⁵³ Albers, 109.

the feeling, 'there'll come a day' which implies no real acceptance and demonstrates conclusively that the struggle is still on.⁵⁴

A crucial dynamic for both Albers and Tiebout appears to be self will, or will to power, fueling grandiosity and defiance. When persons surrender, they no longer function out of a false sense of self which fuels their defiance and grandiosity. In contrast, when persons submit, they continue to live with a core belief that they can control reality. David A. Stewart frames the relationship between surrender and will to power in similar ways.

My will power has brought me grief too often. I do not trust it any more. Will power is fear. It nearly destroyed me. Yes, now I have it! Will power, false pride, morbid fear - they all add up to death. But I want to live! So I must overcome fear, by wanting to live more than I want to die. I surrender to life. As I surrender to life, I surrender to God.⁵⁵

Note that conversion and surrender are rarely absolute. Surrender starts the process of recovery by enabling persons to grow in awareness of the damage done by their will to power. In surrender, persons begin to open themselves to needs to be in relationship with self, others and God. Such awareness invites the healing of the inner child, interpersonal relationships and relationship with God. Put another way, the process of surrender begins the process of

⁵⁴ Tiebout, The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process, 9.

⁵⁵ David A. Stewart. Thirst for Freedom (Toronto: Musson, 1960), 108.

recovery, and recovery is a process of surrendering belief in the absolute power of self will.

The Twelve Steps, God, The Will To Power and
The Will To Please

Since much of Chapter 4 focused on how dualistic theology became normative for the Christian community, that discussion will not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that through history, hierarchical images of God and creation have shaped understandings of sin and salvation. The result of this process which is of present concern is that, in large part, sin is understood in male terms. Put another way, human sin is framed in terms of pride and will to power. The twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous largely embodies this vision of sin. The concepts of surrender and recovery are shaped by an understanding of sin which focuses on pride, will to power and control. Such images also carry with them implicit understandings of the God/human relationship. While such perspectives on sin apply to part of the human family, they do not necessarily apply to the whole.

With regard to God, twelve step programs are clear that images of God are less important than the process of surrender and recovery. Spirituality is understood in broad terms within twelve step programs. Such an approach helps members avoid entanglement in doctrinal, theological and political baggage that often accompanies specific religious traditions. Further, such an approach helps members who

feel alienated by religious communities develop a spirituality without traditional church involvement. While twelve step meetings sometimes are associated with specific religious traditions, the majority of meetings are not connected with any specific religious group or institution. Also, the emphasis on education, group support and spiritual growth in twelve step programs offers recovering persons a safe community to explore their spirituality. Finally, defining spirituality in broad terms allows for considerable diversity within twelve step recovery groups.

Yet recovering persons do not simply pull their spirituality out of the air. Images of God and the spiritual journey are embedded in culture. Recovering individuals and the twelve step recovery process cannot be isolated from culturally reinforced images of God. Though twelve step programs define spirituality in broad terms and do not integrate religious traditions into the recovery process, the use of various terms and phrases in the twelve steps indicate the presence of an implicit, or unacknowledged, theology and spirituality.

For example:

(1) The use of the terms and phrases "Higher Power," "Power greater than ourselves," "praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out" and "humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings" reflect a vision of God based in an ontological hierarchy.⁵⁶

(2) The use of concepts such as "personal powerlessness," "unmanageability" and "restoring us to sanity" reflect a

⁵⁶ Alcoholics Anonymous, 59-60.

fall/redemption vision of God based in the theological concept of original sin.⁵⁷

Images of God in North America and Western Europe have been largely shaped by religious traditions whose visions of God are based on power and hierarchy. As discussed in Chapter 4, such visions of God and the spiritual journey support the addictive process, and are unintentionally embedded in the twelve step process.

To surrender to a God embedded in an ontological hierarchy is to enter into a relationship where meaning can not dwell, fundamentally, within the person. In an ontological hierarchy, meaning, value, life and power must be earned by, or granted to the person by an external Power. A fundamental belief in twelve step recovery programs is that the process of surrender, understood as acceptance, to a Higher Power results in persons' being increasingly able to take charge of their own lives in a responsible manner, and thus becoming co-creators.⁵⁸ Such mutuality and cooperation is not supported in an ontological hierarchy. Spirituality interpreted through transcendent ontology serves to reinforce dominant-submissive patterns of relating.

Still, surrender as acceptance does function as a viable means to begin the journey of recovery for persons whose sin centers on will to power. Surrender does invite

⁵⁷ Alcoholics Anonymous, 59-60.

⁵⁸ Whitfield, Alcoholism, Attachments and Spirituality, 54.

some of the human family to accept that they cannot control themselves and creation. Surrender does invite some persons back into community. This is illustrated by the reality that the twelve steps continues to provide a means of healing for many persons.

Bridget Clare McKeever addresses issues of the masculinization of sin as it relates to dependency on prescribed drugs in women.⁵⁹ McKeever identifies pride and will-to-power as fundamental male sins, and states that this vision of sin has become universalized through the sin of sexism.⁶⁰ Of most interest to this authors' work is McKeever's understanding of women's sinfulness and how this impacts drug addiction among women. With regard to women's sinfulness, McKeever states that

While pride and will-to-power (especially power over women) designates appropriately the fundamental male sin, woman's original sin is quite the opposite. It lies rather in her will to subordination, her lack of the courage to become, to name and resist the forces that oppress her. . . Behind the specific surface tendencies that I will subsequently describe lies that basic original sin of will to subordination, of which these are many concrete manifestations in the attitudes and behavior of women.⁶¹

This will to subordination expresses itself in a wide variety of behavior. In particular, McKeever is interested

⁵⁹ Bridget Clare McKeever, A Pastoral Response to Dependency on Prescribed Drugs in Women, Ph.D. Diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1983 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1983), pp. 135-45.

⁶⁰ McKeever, 136, 139.

⁶¹ McKeever, 138.

in drug addiction among women, and what needs the drugs fill.

Behind several of the sinful tendencies which Valarie Goldstein mentions earlier lies the basic conviction under which many women suffer, i.e., that the source of all good resides outside of themselves. From this conviction arises a loneliness and an emptiness which they look to others to alleviate. But that loneliness may be so profound that it cannot be alleviated even by the best intentioned person. Women who suffer in this way are constantly vulnerable to disappointment and are liable to become resentful, chronic complainers. Such a woman is also liable to become dependent on drugs as a means of alleviating the pain of that loneliness. I do not intend to give the impression here that woman should not seek, even demand, to have their valid affective needs fulfilled. Indeed steps to do so in a direct way might be a healthy remedy for the syndrome to which I refer. However, I refer here to the fundamental need to claim one's own inner goodness, a risk and an act which woman must do for herself in order to deem herself deserving of the care and respect of others.⁶²

McKeever identifies a fundamental need which the four fold path addresses; the need to claim one's original, inner goodness as a crucial issues in recovery. This need is shaped far less by the will to power than by the will to subordination or will to please. While the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous is unquestionably a powerful source of healing, particularly for persons shaped by the will to power, for those whose wounds are shaped more by the will to please, it has the potential to oppress rather than liberate.

The potential oppression inherent in twelve step programs for women and others whose sin is the will to

⁶² McKeever, 144-45.

please, is that it unintentionally reinforces their belief in their powerlessness. Instead of addressing such persons' need to affirm inner goodness, the twelve steps may reinforce their lack of self will and low self esteem. At best, the theology and spirituality inherent in the twelve steps may use language about self and God which does not speak to the needs and wounds of many persons. At worst, the theology and spirituality of the twelve steps may reinforce the very wounds it seeks to heal. For a clinical discussion of personality and social characteristics of persons who typically do and do not respond to the twelve steps, see Appendix B.

Twelve step recovery programs such as Codependents Anonymous have proven to be popular, and the twelve steps are used by many individual therapists and treatment centers for the treatment of codependence. Al-Anon twelve step programs are similarly popular, and have an even longer history of addressing the needs of persons in relationship with alcoholics, addicts and others.

This author's experience of these programs is that they focus largely on issues of control. The codependent or member of Al-Anon is seen as striving to control the person they are in relationship with. The dynamic of control is unquestionably a central concern. Both programs respond to this issue by supporting persons and interpreting the program in such a way that a crucial element of recovery is letting go, or surrender of control. This author's central

issue is that while letting go, or accepting, is crucial, what is missing is a focus on, and celebration of the inner goodness of the person. A fundamental need of persons living out of a will to please is affirmation and celebration of self. Claiming one's inner goodness is a fundamental precursor to claiming one's rights and value in the complex world or relationships.

The focus on letting go of control reflects an underlying definition of sin as will to power, defiance and grandiosity. Codependents are frequently viewed as equally controlling, defiant and grandiose as the person they are in relationship with; the codependent is, however, more subtle. Again, there is no doubt that issues of control are present in codependence. This is not the issue. The issue is that twelve step programs respond to people who are living out of a will to please as if they had the same recovery needs as persons living out of a will to power. Without a doubt, sin can not be neatly divided into two broad categories. Creation is far more complex than these divisions allow for. Still, in a world dominated by masculinized visions of God, sin and salvation, there is good reason to believe that the needs, wounds, strengths and visions of non-dominant persons will either be ignored or subsumed under the rubrics of the dominant group.

There is no question that the twelve steps have been effective with a wide variety of persons with many different issues. What is pointed to here is that there are other

needs and paths to recovery not addressed by the twelve steps. Further, due to the vision of God, sin and salvation embedded in the twelve steps, the twelve steps may subtly reinforce oppression due to its patriarchal context.

This discussion has focused on how such patriarchal visions of God, sin and salvation subtly oppress those whose deep wound is the will to please. In light of the discussion on oppression found in Chapter 4, dualistic ontologies oppress both the powerless and the powerful. How the patriarchal theology and spirituality embedded in the twelve steps oppress those it is meant to serve, is a discussion beyond the scope of this study. It is, however, an important topic.

There are many paths to recovery. The four fold path is an avenue to recovery which invites persons to celebrate their uniqueness, inner goodness and original blessing. The four fold path speaks powerfully to the needs of persons whose sin is shaped less by defiance and grandiosity than by the desire to please. As such, it offers a unique and powerful path to recovery.

CHAPTER 7

Case Illustration: The Four Fold Path and Work With A Self-Identified Codependent

This case study illustrates the use of the four fold path for the treatment of codependence. The purpose of this case study is to illustrate how this author used the model presented in Chapter 6 with a self-identified codependent in individual therapy. As such, this case presentation does not address all aspects of work with the client, but, rather, focuses on resources from the four fold path. Further, while considerable counseling was done with both the client and her husband, only work with the client is presented. Given that this is a single case illustration, no generalizations are made or intended regarding work with all codependents or addicted persons. Suggestions for clinical testing of the model are made in Chapter 8.

Every effort has been made to protect the identity of the client presented in this case. Identifying information such as names, occupations, dates, locations and so forth have been disguised. Specific interchanges presented are from notes, verbatims and case material.

Identifying Information

Sarah is a fifty-three year-old, second generation Irish-American woman, married for twenty nine years to Ron.

Sarah and Ron have five children ranging in age from fourteen to twenty eight. All of the children live at home. Sarah has worked for the past two year as a salesperson in a department store. Her volunteer experiences have been limited to activities connected with raising her children.

Sarah's parents live in a different state. Her father is an alcoholic, and she describes her mother as spending most of her time taking care of her father. She has two older brothers and one younger sister. Both of her older brothers are alcoholics, and she describes her younger sister as extremely withdrawn and noncommunicative.

Sarah was raised in the Lutheran church. She describes her mother as deeply religious, and her father as tolerating her mother's church activities. Sarah was active in a church until approximately five years into her marriage. At that point her church activities began to focus increasingly around her children. When she began therapy she did not attend church.

Presenting Issue(s)

Sarah and Ron came together for the first session. Ron identified the issue as Sarah's depression, lack of energy, irritability and occasional bursts of anger followed by long periods of crying. Sarah reported that she had seen a psychiatrist on two previous occasions approximately five years ago. The psychiatrist gave her medication for depression. She reported that the medication helped for a while, but then was ineffective.

Late in the first session, Ron also identified sexuality as an issue; specifically, Sarah's lack of interest in sex. Sarah concurred that her lack of interest in sexuality was a problem. At the close of the session, Ron made it clear that this was Sarah's problem, that she needed to come to therapy, but he would be willing to come if necessary. Sarah concurred, but showed some interest in Ron's coming on a more regular basis. Ron stated he would be willing to come as often as necessary, but that Sarah first needed to deal with her depression. The therapy contract established during the first session was to work with Sarah for a period of approximately six weeks, and then reevaluate. Sarah agreed to the contract.

During the second session, Sarah identified herself as a codependent. When asked what this meant, Sarah was unclear. She said one of her best friends had jokingly referred to her as a founding member of "Codependents-R-Us." Further, several other friends and people at work had referred both to themselves and her as codependent. One of her friends referred her to the book Codependent No More. Sarah bought the book, read parts of it and became depressed over how accurately it described her life and feelings.

During this session, Sarah also began to identify how unhappy she was at home and in the marriage. She described the family as a circus, with Ron playing ring master. Generally, he was a benevolent leader who allowed the kids do what they wanted, and ignored her. However, when

something was out of order in the house, such as cobwebs on the stand under the TV or a child failing school, he would become tyrannical, declaring it was time to "whip the family into shape." Sarah also described Ron as a heavy drinker who would insult her in public after having had too much to drink.

History

During the intake, Sarah reported having very good relations with both parents, but her reports gradually changed as she became increasingly aware of how scared she felt as a child.

Sarah: I guess I'm just starting to figure out what my parents didn't give me and what they did give me. They gave me a lot of fear, I guess. Not really by scaring me, or anything, but just by my mom always being scared of dad. And I guess he was really scared of her, in a way. Anyway, I wound up being scared most of the time."

Jim: Scared?

Sarah: Uh huh. Scared about how dad was going to be when he got home. Was he going to throw a fit because, oh, just because. So, I guess mom got scared when it was time for him to come home. Actually, I guess she was kind of on edge all the time. But what I remember most is everybody getting ready for him to come home.

Sarah pictures her father as being highly self-critical and perfectionistic, not sharing his feelings or touch, but very good at expressing everything through the set of his face and eyebrows and the tone of his voice. She remembers her father as always having something to drink in the evening when he came home, and drinking heavily on the weekends.

Her father worked in sales with a company that did work throughout the United States. As a result, the family moved approximately every three years. She reports that this was a horrible experience because she felt like an outsider wherever she was. One way she compensated for this was by becoming the teachers pet, and becoming friends with others who were on the outside of whatever community she was a member of.

Sarah describes her mother as very supportive, warm, and caring; yet not overtly warm or affectionate. She views her mother as always being tired. Sarah believes her mother spent so much energy taking care of her father and protecting the family from his anger, that she did not have enough energy left to really love her. Her mother worked sporadically outside of the home as a food service person in school cafeterias.

Sarah went to college in order to become a nurse. After completing two years of school, she worked in a hospital for three years. During this period she met Ron. They dated for three years, and were married. Her mother disliked Ron, and did not want her to marry him. Her dad liked Ron, and encouraged her to marry him. After marrying Ron, Sarah became pregnant within two years, had the first of their children, and did not work outside the home.

Sarah reports feeling basically happy through the first twenty years of the marriage. Beginning at the birth of

their last child, fourteen years ago, she reports that something changed.

Sarah: "Ron didn't change. I think I just felt, well, overwhelmed, with Julie (the new child). Ron had never really helped with any of the kids, but then I wanted his help. He just sort of said something nice, and went back to work. I guess I felt angry. I think that's why Ron dislikes Ann (Sarah's closest friend) so much. Every time I talked to Ann, I would come home a little angry. Then I would pick at Ron for not helping me more, or for not staying around on weekends.

Two years later, Sarah's depression became serious enough that she went, at Ron's prompting, to a psychiatrist. She received medication for depression. Sarah saw the psychiatrist twice, and stayed on the medication for several months. Over the course of the next five years, Sarah's life was marked by a general sense of depression marked by occasional angry outbursts. What prompted Ron to bring Sarah to therapy with me, as much as any other factor, was her near total disinterest in sex. What prompted Sarah to come to therapy was both a growing sense that something was deeply wrong with her life and the cumulative effect of feedback from friends regarding Ron's treatment of her and her passivity.

The Therapeutic Process/Spiritual Journey

I saw Sarah for twenty three sessions. This included sessions in which Sarah and Ron came together to work on marriage issues. Throughout therapy, Ron continued to voice the belief that Sarah was the problem.

Sarah's sense of being a victim, her anger at Ron and her sense of worthlessness and powerlessness dominated the first ten sessions. The first two sessions focused on Sarah telling her story. During the third session, I introduced Sarah to the four fold path.

I explained the four paths in non-theological language, and focused on the importance of her affirming herself and embracing all of her feelings as a way of growing. I stated that the purpose of the via positiva was to focus her on loving herself. In short, the via positiva is a hug; it is a celebration of warmth, goodness and joy. Furthermore, the via positiva focuses not only on learning to hug ourselves but also to invite and accept hugs from others. Thus, the via positiva focuses not only on learning to love ourselves but inviting others to love us as well.

I explained that the via negativa focused on feeling her pain and grieving her losses. Since life was more than hugs and celebrations, the via negativa focused on feeling all of our feelings; particularly the so-called negative feelings such as pain, anger and fear. If the via positiva is a hug, the via negativa is a shudder coming from deep within. I put the via positiva and via negativa in context by explaining that without pain, joy has little meaning; without fear, hope has little meaning. Thus, although pain and joy, fear and hope feel, on the surface, very different, they are closely bound together.

The via creativa is the energy to change and recreate life, which comes from being aware of both the via positiva and via negativa. I used the example of a car battery with positive and negative poles. If a car is not connected to both poles of a battery, the battery is useless and the car will not start. However, when the car is connected to both the positive and negative poles, it has access to the energy it needs both to start and run. I stated that the via creativa focuses on energy. The via creativa is the creative energy released when both feelings of love and acceptance as well as anger and fear are embraced, experienced and expressed.

Continuing the image of the battery, I stated that batteries are made of cells where two opposite materials react to create electricity. If a battery has only a few cells, only a few sets of opposites, it can produce very little energy. However, the more cells a battery has, the more energy it is capable of producing and storing. Likewise, the more feelings we embrace, experience and express, the more energy we have to live and act. The via creativa is the creative energy released by feeling and expressing the via positiva and via negativa in our lives.

Building on the image of the car battery, I explained that the via creativa is like being able to start our car on a cold morning, get into it, and drive where we need to go. However, along the way we often see persons sitting beside the road with dead batteries. The via transformativa occurs

when our battery is charged, the car is running, we see someone in need, and stop to help. Right now, it may take every bit of energy our battery can produce just to get up in the morning and make it through the day. However, as new cells are added and we learn how to connect our new and improved battery to the engine of our spirit, not only can we get up and go, but we have energy left over to share with others.

I also used the image of a braided rope to explain how the four viae are different but connected. I stated that the four viae are like four strands of the same rope which were often woven together so tightly that they were indistinguishable. Sarah stated that she understood, and that this made sense to her.

At this stage of our work together, I focused more on the via positiva and via negativa and less on the via creativa and via transformativa. I did explain the via creativa and via transformativa in terms of the journey of healing. In addition to the image of the battery as a way of explaining the relationship between the via positiva and via negativa, I used the image of two sides of one coin. Though different, they were connected in such a way as to be one.

Midway during the third session, Sarah began to repeat a list of all the things she did for Ron and the kids when the following exchange took place.

Jim: I hear all the things you do for Ron and the kids, mainly Julie, but I'm not so sure I know what you do for you.

Sarah: What do you mean?

Jim: What do you do to take care of you?

Sarah: You mean like time with Ann (a close friend)?

Jim: Uh huh.

Sarah: I spend lots of time with Ann.

Jim: What's lots of time?

Sarah: I talk with her on the phone every week, and I know I'm over at the house at least (pause) oh, every two weeks.

Jim: I'm glad you give yourself time with her. What about time with you?

Sarah: (laughs) With a house full of kids? (laughs)

Jim: Yes, with a house full of kids. Time for you...

Sarah: (deep sigh and long pause) There's really not time, by the time I...

Jim: (breaking in anticipating a repeated list of all she does for others) I know all the things you do for them. You care a lot for them. What about you.

Sarah: I'm on the phone with Ann all the time...

Jim: A little while ago you said you could remember when you were younger you liked just sitting in church. Getting there before everything started, and just sitting. You liked the quite, and the uh. (pause because I am uncertain what she said)

Sarah: I liked the sound of the fans. I thought they sounded like angels. (laughs)

Jim: Can you give yourself some time with the angels, or at least some quiet time this week? Some time just to listen to you.

Sarah: (no response, looks puzzled)

- Jim: How about ten minutes in the morning and some time in the evening just to sit and be. You don't have to do anything, just give yourself permission to relax for a while.
- Sarah: I use to sit around in the morning and just drink a cup of coffee. I could do it when the kids were in school. When the house was empty.
- Jim: How did it feel?
- Sarah: I can remember feeling sort of irresponsible, you know, putting my feet up in the middle of the morning and not doing anything. It was also nice, just sitting there without all the noise. Sometimes, now, I stop in the middle of the day and watch Oprah, but that usually just makes me upset.
- Jim: (condensed from the next several exchanges) If you want, take a walk. Get out of the house and look around. Whatever you do, take time to take lots of deep breaths and feel the air go in and out of you. Look around you. If you go on walks, imagine you are a little girl, the little girl in you, and that you are walking in an area you've never been before. Look at everything closely, like you have never seen it before. Try looking at the stuff around you like the world was new. Because that's what taking time for you is about. It's to recharge you. Help you look at you like you are new.
- Sarah: So you think I should start taking walks?
- Jim: I think you should do something you would enjoy. Something to celebrate you, to help you center on you for a change.

The purpose of this interchange was both to affirm Sarah's value as a person and to help her to begin to focus on herself. The suggestion to walk invited Sarah, in a non-threatening way, to begin to touch her feelings and experiences. It also served to begin to challenge the isolation which surrounded Sarah. As a spiritual discipline, walking and quiet time serve to begin the process of centering and reawakening hope by physically and

emotionally giving persons space. Both centering and reawakening hope are central aims in the via positiva.

Sarah missed our next session. She called saying she had the flu. The following week she reported she had walked almost everyday until Ron had called the house in the morning and she was not there. That evening he scolded her for "doing nothing."

Sarah continued to take walks almost everyday, trying to time them when she did not think Ron would call. She noted in her journal, which was a part of therapy, that when she first tried to look at the world as if it were new, it was hard. Later, though, she noted it became easier and easier. She also reported that she even managed to look at herself as if she were new, at least a few times. She said it felt like being a little girl again.

Two sessions later, I introduced a meditation on self-identification. I presented it as a way of celebrating and focusing on her, as a practice in the via positiva. We practiced it during the session, and then Sarah used it during her quiet times and on her walks. I introduced the meditation during a period when Sarah was beginning to realize that she was unclear as to where Ron ended and she began. She was also beginning to express to me her anger at Ron and at herself, but was not clear how or in what direction to express that anger.

Jim: You've talked a lot about being all mixed up with Ron and the kids and all the things you do, so that you are not sure who is you. That's kind of a long sentence.(we both laugh) Let me

try again. It sounds like sometimes you are not sure who you are most angry at.

Sarah: . . . (nods her head in agreement) Sometimes I'm just furious at Ron, and then I get mad at me for putting up with him.

Jim: It's like all your feelings get mixed up with Ron, the kids, the house work and all the other stuff, things in your life.

Sarah: Uh huh. I feel confused about everything.

Jim: One way to sort through this stuff is to do what you have been doing. Walk. Take time for you just to be quiet; to listen to the quiet. Another way is to do a mediation, almost like a chant. Would you like to try something new?

Sarah: Ok.

Jim: (I give her instructions to relax and breath deeply.) (Exhale) I am Ron's wife. (Inhale)
But I am more. (Exhale) I am Julie's mom...(Inhale)
But I am more. (Exhale) I am Ann's friend.
(Inhale) but I am more. (I continue with other examples) I am me...and I am good. I am me...and I love me. I am me...and I am loved. (silence)

Sarah: (crying) I don't know. I don't believe Ron really loves me.

Jim: It also sounds like you are not sure how much you love yourself.

Sarah: No. Oh, I don't know. It's hard to think about loving myself. It just doesn't feel right.

The week after using the self-identification meditation, Sarah reported she spent most of the week feeling angry. Much of the anger was directed at Ron, but increasingly she felt angry at herself. She did use the meditation, but found herself focusing on phrases such as "I am Ron's wife...but I am more," and then feeling angry. She also reported saying the phrase "I am me" over and over, and "not knowing what it means to be just me."

The purpose of the self-identification mediation is to focus on affirming self. As such it is a part of the process of the via positiva. The exercise also touched Sarah's deep sense of personal doubt. As such, the mediation also invited her not only to experience her anger at Ron, but also to focus on her anger at herself, the via negativa.

The following two sessions began with Sarah venting her anger at Ron, and then slowly moved toward Sarah's feeling angry at herself. During this time, Sarah became increasingly angry with herself, and with this anger came a growing sense of helplessness and powerlessness. When Sarah could no longer focus blame on Ron, she felt that her only alternative was to blame herself. During this period of self-blame and self-doubt, I focused on helping her to affirm herself as a person and to feel all of her feelings. I used two meditations during this period to address her inner goodness, the via positiva, and the darkness of her self-blame, the via negativa.

Sarah: Last Monday I asked Ron what he wanted from me, and he just walked off. I could tell he was angry, but he just went in the bedroom and closed the door.

Jim: It's like he slammed more than the door on you.

Sarah: But that's all he's done for years. When he does talk to me, it's about the kids, or about money, or my spending too much time with Ann. What's the use.

Jim: Hopeless.

Sarah: Uh huh.

Jim: It feels like you keep turning to Ron for life. I don't mean you shouldn't be able to go to him for love, but it's not working. It's like you keep going back to a dry well. Then you get mad at the well for being dry, and mad at yourself for going back to the same well.

Sarah: I know. I just don't know what else to do.

Jim: I have an image for you to try if you are interested.

Sarah: Sure.

Jim: Close your eyes, and breath deeply. Imagine that you are standing at the kitchen sink at home. Look around you, and picture what everything looks like. Now, on the counter beside the sink, see a large pitcher. In your imagination, see what it looks like. Is it a metal pitcher. Plastic. Ceramic. Does it have designs on it, or is it plain? How big is it?

Now reach over and pick it up. Feel its weight. Now put it under the faucet and fill it up. Fill it up to the brim, so that it is almost overflowing. Imagine the water as the source of life. Feel how heavy it is. (nods her head and moves slightly as if carrying something heavy) Now, if you have house plants, imagine going all through the house watering them. If you don't have any plants in the house, imagine going outside and watering plants. Pour a little water on all the thirsty plants. Imagine them drinking the water and turning green.

Notice that the pitcher is almost empty. Image that you feel angry because there is still lots of watering that needs to be done. Pour the last of the water on a plant, and just stand wherever you are. Imagine yourself getting angry at the pitcher for being empty, and at the plants for needing so much water. Feel how frustrating it is to stand there being angry, to stand there with an empty pitcher. When you are ready, open your eyes.

Jim: How are you feeling?

Sarah: I get angry at the plants and the pitcher all the time.

Jim: Angry at your own emptiness.

Sarah: No, more angry (pause) oh, at having so many ferns in the house, and having to lug that heavy pitcher around all the time. (long pause)

Jim: And angry at (Sarah continues)

Sarah: And angry at me for not figuring out how to go back to the sink and fill the pitcher up. And angry at Ron for not watering himself.

I see the above mediation as embracing both the via positiva and the via negativa. The meditations affirms Sarah as someone who gives life, shares her inner goodness, the via positiva, yet also points to the role she has taken on as saviour. Sarah's self-criticism, sense of emptiness and desire to take care of everyone around her is the via negativa. I used a second meditation, which again embraced both the via positiva and the via negativa, the following week.

Sarah: I'm just not use to being nice to myself.

Jim: Being nice to yourself is sort of like exercise. You know it's good for you, but doing it is something else. Getting into the habit of being nice to yourself can be hard.

Sarah: Uh huh. And with Ron and the kids around it can really be tough.

Jim: You said the image helped.

Sarah: It did. I didn't take any time just to sit down and breathe, and all that, but it did help to image going around and watering everyone. Particularly when everybody was treating me like a maid.

Jim: What does it feel like to be treated like a maid?

Sarah: Awful. I hate it. It's like I'm the one picking up for everybody else. I'm just cheap labor.

Jim: Cheap labor. How does it feel to be cheap labor?

Sarah: I don't know. (pauses) I get angry and sad, but then I think this is what I'm suppose to do. Then I get angry at myself for being so self-centered.

Jim: It's like you're not sure if you are worth being treated well, or treating yourself well.

Sarah: No, I guess I'm not. (pause) If I do treat myself well, Ron doesn't like it. Even the kids tell me that I'm being lazy. How can I treat myself well when they're all telling me how lazy I am!

Jim: You do give them great power over you.

Sarah: If the kitchen counter isn't totally clean when Ron comes in, he asks me what I did all day while he was working.

Jim: So you're not worth much unless you do your duties.

Sarah: No. At least that's what Ron makes real clear.

Jim: And you buy what he says.

Sarah: (thoughtful) Yes, I do. If Ron is mad at me it ruins my whole day. Even if Julie gets angry at me, I feel like a failure.

Jim: I have a meditation that might fit where you are right now.

Sarah: Ok.

Jim: (instructions to relax and breathe deeply) In your imagination, look at the past week. Let everything that happened go through your mind like a movie. As you play the movie, feel all the feelings that your memories bring. Ask yourself, Where was I true to me? and Where did I let Ron or Julie or the other kids take over?

Pretend to be a movie critic. As a gentle critic, ask yourself whose direction you followed through the week. Look at important scenes in the movie of your week, and ask who the director was. Was it you, or was it Ron or the kids? Don't get down on yourself, just make a note of who directed that scene.

Now, imagine the week over again, and focus on key scenes. Where you felt like Ron or the kids directed the scene, imagine what it would be like if you were the director. Re-shoot those

scenes with you in charge. Take as much time as you want. Go through the scenes one by one.

Sarah: Ron and the kids directed a lot of the movie.

Jim: What does it feel like for them to direct your life?

Sarah: (pause. Her eyes begin to tear up.) Unhappy. I just wish they would go away sometimes.

Jim: Go away?

Sarah: Just leave me alone.

Jim: Then you could live the way you want to live.

Sarah: Uh huh.

Jim: Have you ever lived the way you want to live?

Sarah: What do you mean?

Jim: When you lived with your parents, when you were growing up, did you pretty much direct your own movie?

Sarah: No, not really. Dad was in charge of everything.

Jim: It sounds like you replaced your dad with Ron. Someone else to tell you how to live. To write and direct you life.

(We continue in this vein for about fifteen minutes.)

Sarah: But I have been doing it this way for so long, I don't know how to do it any different.

Jim: Every time I hear you name a feeling, feel something, I see you change. I see you claim more of you.

Sarah: But nothing is changing. Everything is the same. Ron is still (looks confused).

Jim: From what you have said, a lot of things are changing. You are taking much better care of yourself, and Ron and the kids are noticing.

Sarah: And they don't like it.

Jim: Do you like it?

Sarah: Sometimes. Well, most of the time, yes. I still don't like being angry.

Throughout these, and following, sessions, Sarah continued to deal with feeling and accepting her own feelings, the via negativa, and with celebrating and accepting herself, the via positiva. She identified love, care, compassion and pleasing others as good feelings, and anger, fear and frustration as bad feelings. The core issues she dealt most directly with were denial, control, people pleasing and limited ability to touch her inner child.

The via positiva focuses on embracing persons' inner goodness. The via negativa focuses on embracing inner woundedness. Sarah is an excellent example of how these two viae cannot be separated into two distinct steps. The process of embracing and affirming Sarah's value as a person involved facing her woundedness. The two are impossible to separate, yet at the same time distinct.

Three sessions after the one described above, Sarah began to express her father and Ron were deeply connected in her life. While I had touched on this several times previously, it did not become the focus of therapy until the thirteenth session. It was also during this period that God became an issue.

Jim: It's good to see you again. How was the week.

Sarah: Confusing.

Jim: Confusing?

Sarah: When I left here last week I thought a lot about being a wife, lover, friend and mother. I really didn't have time to talk to Ron for a couple of days, and then I asked him what he thought the definition of a wife was. He said a wife was somebody who cooked, cleaned, and took care of the house and kids.

Jim: Hmmm.

Sarah: That's all he said, and then he just went out in the garage. That was it.

Jim: How...

Sarah: I wanted to choke him. I just wanted to kill him.

(We continued in this vein for several minutes.)

Sarah: What got me really angry was that is exactly the way my dad use to treat my mom. She was his servant.

Jim: And it's hard to really love servants.

Sarah: That's not love!

Jim: What is it?

Sarah: It's...I don't know what it is. I just, well, just... Every time I try to be anything different, I just can't. I don't know how. That's all I've ever seen. I think back to going to church, even when I would take the kids to Sunday School, and it seems like even there to be good means to be somebody else's servant. You've got to clean up for everybody else.

Jim: It doesn't sound like much fun.

Sarah: It isn't. (long pause) I just feel strange. Like I don't know who to believe anymore.

Jim: If you can't believe God, or at least the church, it's hard to know who to believe.

Sarah: Ann and Harriet tell me one thing, Ron tells me something else and then there's my mom and dad.

Jim: A lot of different voices telling you what to do. Who to be.

Sarah: Uh huh.

Jim: And it's hard to know who to trust.

Sarah: I use to think I knew. Now I don't even trust myself. I married Ron. I don't even stand up to my own kids.

Jim: Let's focus on the voices for a minute, Ok?

Sarah: OK.

Jim: Name all the voices you hear telling you what to do, how to act.

Sarah: Uh, well, there is Ron, all the kids, Ann, Harriet, Shirley at work. And then there's mom and dad, but they don't really tell me how to live anymore.

Jim: But they are still voices inside you.

Sarah: Uh huh. They are still there, that's for sure.

Jim: Close your eyes. Take a couple of deep breaths. Imagine you are in a very familiar place. You feel safe and warm. Image you leave that place to go on a journey. You begin walking away. The farther you go, the more unfamiliar things looks. Now you are surrounded by wide fields. It's open and airy. Breathe in the warm air.

In the distance, look and see a bridge. Walk toward the bridge. When you get there, see that it is over a deep canyon. You can barely see the other side because it is foggy over the canyon. Begin walking over the bridge, and into the fog. Feel the world close gently around you. It's not frightening. It's just different; closer and dimmer. After you have reached the other side of the bridge, walk a while in the fog.

Now, imagine you see a door. It's hard to see around the door because of the fog, but it seems to be a door to a deep cavern in the earth. Walk up to the door and look at it. Pay attention to what it looks like. Reach out and grab the door handle. Notice how it feels in your hand. Turn the nob, and open the door. Feel the door open in your hand.

As you are standing in front of the open door, imagine you hear voices coming from deep within. Listen to the voices. What voices from your life do you hear? Which voice is the loudest? Which voice are you afraid of?

Choose a voice that evokes pain or fear, and invite the voice to come out and talk to you. Now watch as the voice comes toward you. Watch as it

takes shape as a person or memory. What does it look like? What does it feel like to be near the voice, the person, the memory?

Take some time to talk to the voice. Listen to what it has to say. What does it want from you? Ask what the voice needs from you, and why. Take as much time as you need. When you are though talking with the voice, nod your head.

Thank the voice, and watch it go behind the door again. Shut the door, and return home as slowly as you want to.

Sarah: (opens her eyes) I saw Ron, first.

Jim: What did he say?

Sarah: He didn't say a lot. He said he wanted me to be happy, then he told me he wished I was like I use to be.

Jim: Like you use to be?

Sarah: The way things use to be, when I did what he wanted me to do.

Jim: Oh.

Sarah: He really didn't say anything else. I asked him if he could change, and he said I don't know.

Jim: He didn't know if he could change enough for you to be happy?

Sarah: Uh huh. But that's really all he said. Then it was Randy (their 28 year old son). And he said the same thing. He asked me why I was so unhappy, and why couldn't things be like they use to be, before I was so angry.

Jim: He knows you're unhappy and angry.

Sarah: Uh huh, but he doesn't know why. He really doesn't understand. He is so much like his dad. It scares me.

Jim: It's really frightening to think how much Randy has turned out like Ron.

(Here Sarah talks about how Randy treats his girlfriend exactly like Ron treats her, and how she has tried to tell the girlfriend to watch out.)

Sarah: But there's nothing I can really do. I can only deal with me. With Ron and me. (pause) You know, I treat God just like I treat Ron. I ignore him.

Jim: It sounds lonely.

Sarah: It is. I guess I should go back to church, but I don't really want to.

Jim: What does God's voice sound like?

Sarah: I don't know. I really don't. Critical. Always critical. And only nice when I have been real good.

Jim: Like Ron, and your dad.

Sarah: Uh huh. They all say I should be better. That I just can't seem to do things right.

Jim: They all, God included, think you should be better. That you're not good enough.

Sarah: Uh huh. I'm never good enough.

(The conversation continued on the theme of how she has never been good enough, and that is why it is hard for her to treat herself well.)

I used the voices meditation three more times over the course of our work together. Each time, the voice she spoke to was either that of Ron, her father or one of the male children in the family. Further, each time the voice was highly critical of her. When asked what the voice needed from her, the response was that it needed her to get back in line. The change in these conversations is that by the fourth time we used the voice meditation, she no longer simply listened to the voice. By the fourth meditation, she actively disagreed with the voices, and joined in conversation with them. Put another way, by the fourth mediation, late in therapy, she had begun to find her voice.

Toward the end of therapy, Sarah stated she had talked to the voices on a walk, and this time the voice she had talked to was her mom's. The conversation between Sarah and her mom focused around her mother apologizing for not taking better care of her, and Sarah saying it was OK; she had done her best.

Around session sixteen, Sarah began to draw clearer boundaries with Ron and the kids. Increasingly she found the courage to do things outside the home. Specifically, Sarah began spending more time with her friends, which was a point of considerable tension between her and Ron. She also joined a bowling league, and began attending church, though she did so sporadically.

I saw this change as Sarah's journey on the via creativa. I saw her growing courage and desire to have a life outside the home as a release of creative energy, and I shared this interpretation with her. I also shared that her taking care of herself within the family demonstrated that she was walking the path, creatively reclaiming her life. The uniqueness of this approach is that instead of simply framing creativity as an indication of psychological health, I set it in the larger context of tapping into, and expressing the energy of her spirituality.

During session eighteen, Sarah addressed issues around church and God.

Sarah: I went to church on Sunday. Ron didn't really like it, but I went anyway.

Jim: How was it for you?

Sarah: I don't know. Ok, I guess.

Jim: What was OK about it, and what wasn't OK?

Sarah: I don't know. I guess what was most OK was the people. I sat with Brenda and her family (a neighborhood friend) and that was OK.

Jim: Was it?

Sarah: It was sort of lonely. I wanted my whole family to be there, (pause) but not the family I have.

Jim: The dream, not the reality.

Sarah: Uh huh. So that was the sort of OK part. What was not OK was, I don't know, maybe Pastor Ted's sermon.

Jim: Was it Pastor Ted's sermon, or Pastor Ted?

Sarah: (laughs) I guess it was Pastor Ted, or a little of both.

Jim: Tell me about it.

Sarah: (She goes into a lengthy description of the sermon, and her history with Pastor Ted.)

Jim: It sounds like you resent him telling you how to live, even if it just sounds like that's what he is doing.

Sarah: I guess I do. I resent him tell me what to do.

Jim: I'm curious. Would it make any difference if it were a woman in the pulpit? A woman preaching.

Sarah: No, probably not.

Jim: I was just curious. What would make a difference?

Sarah: I don't know.

Jim: Don't know?

Sarah: No, I really don't.

(At this point we spend several minutes trying to find out what it is that makes her uncomfortable in church.)

Jim: I have an idea. Sit back, and relax. Close your eyes, and imagine the sanctuary full of people.

Pastor Ted is in the pulpit and Pastor Townsend is sitting behind the lectern. Now imagine you are at the back of the church, but nobody can see you. You're invisible. Slowly walk in through the door you usually come in, and ask yourself what the door is saying to you. Now go into the sanctuary. Look around. What are the pews saying to you. What are the people saying to you. What is Pastor Ted saying to you. Look at the whole church, and ask yourself what is each part saying to you.
(silence)

Now, ask yourself what you would like the church, the pews, the alter and each person to say to you. (silence)

(What follows are excerpts from the conversation which followed this image.)

Sarah: Father Ted and Father Townsend were both saying "Be Good. We love you, but be good." The people in the pews were saying "We don't really know you." Brenda was saying she was glad I was there. The pews were saying "Sit down." (laughs)

Jim: What was God saying?

Sarah: (laughs) God was saying "Where Have You Been!"

Jim: Where have you been, or where are you?

Sarah: Lost, I guess. No, not lost. Maybe less lost.

Jim: What did God's voice sound like when God said "Where have you been?"

Sarah: His voice sounded OK. He wasn't angry, or anything.

Jim: Did God sound concerned?

Sarah: Yes, uh huh. He sounded concerned.

Jim: God didn't sound angry.

Sarah: No, He wasn't angry at all. Maybe, curious.

Jim: Curious?

Sarah: Yes, curious.

Jim: What do you think the chances are that God just likes you. Really likes you.

Sarah: Pretty good, I guess.

Jim: God was curious about you. God cares about you.
 God wants you to be happy. To be you.

Sarah: I hope so. I think so.

A crucial change that has taken place is that both Sarah and God are less angry than at the beginning of therapy. Their anger has turned, to some degree, into strength and curiosity. While Sarah was still capable of feeling great anger, she aimed less of her anger directly at Ron and the children. Instead, she transformed much of that anger into setting clearer boundaries and consequences, and asking more clearly for what she needed. God, as well, was less angry, and far more interested in her as a person. While she still struggled with going to church, and with God, much of her anger toward God and the church was transformed into creative energy.

Sarah's experiences of God and the church were far more creative than in the past. This points to the via creativa in action in that she increasingly reshaped her relationship with God and the church. Instead of viewing God and the church as places of judgement, she began to access resources in the church which filled her needs. Instead of focusing on worship, she became involved in the women's group and even talked about joining the softball team. As Sarah began to value herself, she increasingly experienced herself as powerful enough to ask for what she needed; time with friends, bowling, walks and church experiences which were meaningful to her. Further, she began to express this sense

of inner worth within the family in creative and powerful ways.

Instead of either surrendering or exploding with Ron and the children, she increasingly felt comfortable disagreeing with them, and creating realistic expectations for them and herself. Living in the house, while far from a harmonious experience, increasingly became a way for her to express who she was and what she believed. In each of these, and other ways, Sarah put her belief in herself, her needs, wants, feelings and beliefs, the via positiva, into action--the via creativa.

The focus of the via transformativa is that as persons grow in love and compassion for themselves, they are led to share this with others. Sarah touched on the via transformativa toward the end of our work together. The evidence that she was moving in the direction of the via transformativa is that the relationship between her and her friends changed. Instead of feeling as if she was always going to her friends for help, she noted that her friends came to her as well.

Sarah stated that her best friend, Ann, noticed that in the past, their conversations were almost always one way, with Ann giving advice to Sarah, but lately their talks were far more mutual. Sarah began to share her discoveries, her wisdom, with Ann. While this was a subtle shift, it was a powerful one for Sarah. Put another way, Sarah's compassion for others began to be a part of her daily life. The change

was subtle, and Sarah struggled with the fine line between compassionately sharing who she was becoming and trying to control others. Still, Sarah began the process of learning to speak her truths, and to do so in such a way as to be heard.

Conclusion

Sarah terminated therapy when the presenting problems of her depression and marital dissatisfaction had been addressed to her satisfaction. At the end of therapy, Sarah reported that her depressions had largely abated, and that while her marriage and family relationships were far from ideal, she felt better equipped to address her part of the dissatisfaction between herself and Ron. Sarah stated that she continued to feel dissatisfied with the marriage, but saw no way out, for a while. What she could do was take better care of herself in the midst of her situation.

I spoke with Sarah, by phone, approximately three months after her termination. She reported that she was doing well. Sarah stated that her depression had not returned, the family was in less chaos, and she and Ron had a stable relationship and adequate sex life. She reported that Ron, in particular, was pleased that her outbursts of anger had largely disappeared. In terms of her sense of powerlessness and low self esteem, Sarah believed she would always struggle with loving herself. One difference therapy had made, according to Sarah, was that she was aware that not loving herself was an ongoing issue that affected almost

every part of her life. Further, she felt that she now blamed Ron and the kids less for her unhappiness.

In terms of the four fold path, Sarah reported that she continued to walk, give herself quiet time and have conversations with the voices in her life. Further, she had begun attending church "fairly regularly," and had joined the women's group at church. While she continued to feel somewhat uncertain about attending church, she stated she "got what she needed from the people at church, more than anything else."

During one period in therapy, I gave Sarah the assignment of keeping a journal of whether she was celebrating herself--the via positiva, feeling her pain or grieving her losses--the via negativa, creating her world--the via creativa, or trying to change the world--the via transformativa. The assignment was short term and informal, and was not a central part of therapy. I imaged the four fold path as gears in a four speed transmission, and asked her to be aware of which spiritual gear she was in. Three months after termination, Sarah commented she continued to make mental notes of which spiritual gear she was in. After telling me how much time she still spent trying to shift from second gear, the via negativa, into third, the via creativa, she laughed.

CHAPTER 8

Suggestions for Future Research

Whether the model this author proposes is a clinically effective means of recovery from codependence is not addressed in this study. Further research in the form of individual and group clinical trials is required to determine the effectiveness of this approach. An empirical study is proposed as the next step in exploring the effectiveness of the model presented in this dissertation. The study is a group design.

A group process will be initiated to assess the effectiveness of the four fold path as a means of recovery from codependency; it will total eighteen hours over a period of twelve weeks. The purpose of this experiment will be primarily exploratory and illustrative. The primary component of group session will be educational in nature. Participants will be taught a variety of spiritual and psychological techniques in the spirit of Matthew Fox's four fold spiritual path. The goal of this process will be to nourish a spirituality which affirms the inner goodness of persons. A second, through related, component of the group will be therapeutic in nature. Group members will be provided with a safe environment in which to process the educational content of the group, share personal

experiences, learn from group members and integrate spiritual, personal and interpersonal contents. This author believes such a process will facilitate recovery from codependence.

Pre and post test assessment with the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Instrument¹ and Friel Co-Dependency Assessment Inventory², along with interview and case material, will be used to determine changes in levels of codependency and internal vs. external locus of control. The purpose of the Friel Co-Dependency Assessment Inventory will be to assess a level of codependence before and after the group experience. Though the Friel inventory is an experimental instrument which lacks established norms, this author believes it will serve to provide a basic indication of level of codependence. The Friel inventory will be primarily used for illustrative purposes, though statistical analysis will be done.

The Rotter instrument will be used to obtain a picture of levels of internal vs. external locus of control before and after the group experiences. One of the central dimensions of addiction and codependency is the concept of powerlessness or perceived inability to effect control over one's circumstances in life. J.B. Rotter developed the

¹ J.B. Rotter, "Generalized Expectancies for Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement," Psychological Monographs 28 (1966): 1-28.

² John Friel, "Co-Dependency Assessment Inventory: A Preliminary Research Tool," Focus on the Family and Chemical Dependency, May/June 1985: 31-42.

concept of internal-external locus of control to measure the extent to which persons perceive themselves as exercising control over their lives versus the extent to which persons feel they are controlled by external forces. Hence, levels of internal vs. external locus of control should provide an accurate assessment of perceived powerlessness.

Other research needed in the area of codependence includes establishing a widely accepted clinical definition of codependence. Until a widely accepted definition is established, research on recovery modalities will be difficult. Since this study raises the issue of recovery from codependence within the context of a culture shaped by the addictive process, research is also needed on the sociocultural dynamics of codependence.

APPENDIX A

The Development of the Field of Addiction

Until the 1940s addiction, primarily alcoholism, was viewed almost universally as a lack of will or moral fiber.¹ This vision of addiction was influenced heavily by American and European religious communities.² However, as the influence of the church began to be overshadowed by medicine and psychology, the vision of addiction as moral weakness began to fade. Beginning in the 1930s addiction was increasingly viewed as a medical phenomenon.³

By the late 1940s the idea of the disease model of alcoholism was becoming increasingly accepted. The catalyst for this shift in perspective was the success of Alcoholics Anonymous. As Alcoholics Anonymous increasingly demonstrated the ability to help individuals achieve sobriety it came to the attention of researchers such as E.M. Jellinek. Similarly, the success of Alanon in helping people in relationship with alcoholics deal with their issues sparked research by professionals interested in marriage and family theory and therapy. The publication of The Disease Concept of Alcoholism by E.M. Jellinek in 1960

¹ Stephen P. Apthorp, Alcohol and Substance Abuse: A Clergy Handbook (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1985), 39-50.

² Shaffer and Kauffman, 231.

³ E.M. Jellinek, The Disease Concept of Alcoholism (New Haven, Conn.: College & University Press, 1960), 9-10.

appears to have firmly secured the idea of alcoholism as a disease both in professional and public spheres. Given the limited medical research on alcoholism and drug abuse and the popularity of psychology, the predominant paradigm of addiction was psychological. This is not meant to indicate that the study of alcoholism during this period was limited to psychological research. Rather, what is pointed to here is that during this period the most popular paradigm was psychological. Research during this period clearly approached alcoholism as a multi-faceted process.

In the early 1970s the dominance of various psychological models was challenged by the medical model. With the discovery of enkephalins by John Hughes and Hans Kosterlitz, the paradigm of brain chemistry and addiction began to emerge.⁴ The research available on the psychopharmacology⁵ and brain chemistry⁶ of addiction is considerable. Still, while a considerable body of research exists, few clear links between addiction and brain chemistry have been established. What has been established

⁴ John Hughes et al., "Identification of Two Related Pentapeptides From the Brain with Potent Opiate Agonist Activity," Nature 258 (1973): 577-79.

⁵ See in particular: Paul R. Matuschka, "The Psychopharmacology of Addiction," Alcoholism and Substance Abuse: Strategies for Clinical Intervention, eds. Thomas E. Bratter and Gary G. Forrest (New York: Free Press, 1985), 49-73; H.C. Denber, Clinical Psychopharmacology (New York: Stratton Intercontinental Medical Book Corp., 1979); and A.K. Swonger and L.L. Constantine, Drugs and Therapy (Boston: Little Brown, 1976).

⁶ See in particular O.W. Neuhaus and J.M. Orten, Human Biochemistry, 9th ed. (Saint Louis: Mosby, 1975).

is that there are connections between human behavior and brain chemistry. What the precise nature of these connections is and how they affect human behavior remains, in large part, a mystery.

Interestingly enough, beginning in the late 1970s the issue of addiction and spirituality began to emerge once again.⁷ This time, in contrast to the moralism of the pre-1940s, the issue of spirituality was raised by the church, the psychotherapeutic community, and the community of Alcoholics Anonymous.⁸ It was the community of Alcoholics Anonymous who had maintained throughout the past 55 years that addiction was a fundamentally spiritual issue.⁹ The revival of this issue also appears linked with the growing concern for holistic approaches to human behavior.

In way of summary, research in the field of addiction was sparked by the successes of Alcoholics Anonymous. Further, research into the family dynamics surrounding alcoholism was largely sparked by the successes of Alanon in helping those around alcoholics deal both with their own illness and the illness of the alcoholic. While various paradigms have dominated popular and professional perspectives on addiction for periods of time, the perspective which has dominated the study of addiction is

⁷ Lawrence Metzger, From Denial to Recovery (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988), 55-60.

⁸ Apthorp, 18-36.

⁹ Metzger, 56.

that it is a multi-faceted phenomenon which includes biochemical, spiritual, cultural, family systems and intrapsychic factors.

APPENDIX B

Alcoholics Anonymous and its Effectiveness with Certain
Populations

The understanding of the dynamics of recovery inherent in the twelve steps is shaped largely by the experiences of male alcoholics.¹ Thus, the journey of recovery offered in the twelve steps is largely shaped by the needs of males, but applied to the whole human family. Without question, the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have helped countless persons, both male and female, achieve sobriety. However, a considerable body of research suggests that Alcoholics Anonymous is most appealing to middle to upper class males² who function well in group settings³ and are field-dependent in contrast to field-independent⁴. How appropriate Alcoholics Anonymous is for women has also been

¹ Kirkpatrick, 162-65.

² F.M. Canter, "Personality Factors Related to Participation in Treatment of Hospitalized Male Alcoholics," Journal of Clinical Psychology 22 (1966): 114-16; Barry Leach and John L. Norris, "Factors in the Development of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.)," The Treatment and Rehabilitation of the Chronic Alcoholic, eds. B. Kissin and H. Begleiter (New York: Plenum, 1977); and M.B. Bailey and B. Leach, Alcoholics Anonymous: Pathways to Recovery (New York: National Council on Alcoholism, 1965).

³ D.F. Mindlin, "Attitudes Toward Alcoholism and Toward Self: Differences Between Three Alcoholic Groups," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 25 (1964): 136-41.

⁴ H.A. Witkin and D.R. Goodenough, "Field Dependence and Interpersonal Behavior," Psychological Bulletin 84 (1977): 661-89.

called into question.⁵ Research in this area has suggested that Alcoholics Anonymous is generally most effective with males.⁶ The issue of the inherent sexism in the twelve steps has also been the subject of considerable interest.⁷

⁵ John Curlee, "Sex Differences in Patient Attitudes Toward Alcoholism Treatment," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 32 (1971): 643-50.

⁶ A.F. Davidson, "An Evaluation of the Treatment and After-Care of a Hundred Alcoholics," British Journal of Addiction 71 (1976): 217-24.

⁷ Gail Unterberger, "Twelve Steps for Women Alcoholics," Christian Century, 6 Nov. 1989: 1150-52.

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